JANUARY, 1950

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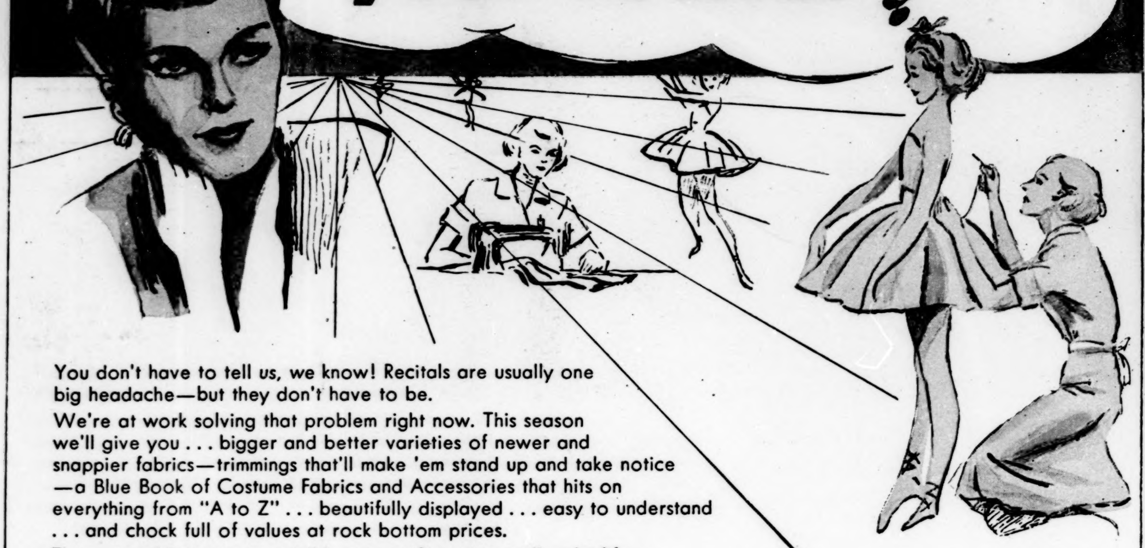

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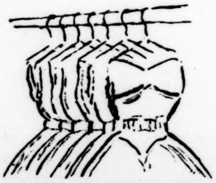

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A New Year's Greeting

A HAPPY NEW YEAR! Yes, the entire staff of Dance Magazine and myself wish everyone everywhere a new year filled with good health and happiness. And in talking about happiness, may I say how sorry I have always been for those who in spite of the gift of health, are still unhappy? So many of us in modern life suffer from misconcept that happiness stems from others. Far from it: happiness comes from within the head, the heart, the soul of the individual. So many people waste their lives in frantic search of happiness, hoping to extract it from a feverish round of parties, from mad search of entertainment, or from relatives, friends and business colleagues, as though these were capable of dispensing the boon of happiness merely for the asking.

But look for happiness only within yourself. Learn to be kind, learn contentment with small things, learn never to hate, learn to enjoy the most humble work. When the world looks darkest, think for a moment of those without sight or the crippled. Have we not seen enough of misery in both peace and war? Those of us who enjoy the boon of good health have the best reason for happiness, and those who are happy can show by their unfailing kindness toward their fellow man, whether family, friends, or business colleague, that we are willing to share our happiness with them.

The day we have learned the secret of happiness, learned by the great philosophers and religious leaders of human history like Moses, Gautama Buddha, Jesus Christ, Mahatma Gandhi — how few there are! that is the day the words hate — brutality — *war* will disappear from the language of men. In spite of the forces which work for evil, I say, contrary to what that old man said to me a year ago, "Young man," said he, "You are wasting your time. There is no room in this world for the idealist. They are ground to dust by the strong and powerful."

To him I say on this half way mark in the 20th century, "Before this century ends, the human race will have learned the errors of violence and force. Only men of good will and good character will be the leaders to a better life, a great human family for happiness and lasting peace."

Yes, don't worry about your children and your children's children. Be happy for them. They are moving toward a finer epoch in human relations.

To all of you from all of us, our most sincere wish for a Happy New Year and a future filled with good health and more of the happy frame of mind.

Sincerely,

Dance
MAGAZINE

VOLUME XXIV NUMBER 1

JANUARY, 1950

The LARGEST,
most WIDELY READ
Dance Publication in the WORLD

294

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ON THE COVER:

"Mr. Puppet", a choreographic play by Nina Fonaroff received its Broadway premiere on December 23rd at the City Center, in the 1st season of New York City Dance Theatre, with Miss Fonaroff as the Doll. The same ballet is being produced in England with Alicia Markova and Anton Dolin as principal dancers.

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CALENDAR of EVENTS, JANUARY, 1950

in **New York City:**

JAN. **7**	8:15	ROSARIO and ANTONIO	Central H.S. Needle Trades
8	3:00	ROSARIO and ANTONIO	92nd St. YMHA
12	8:30	FEDERICO REY and PILAR GOMEZ	American Museum of Nat. History
22	8:40	JEAN ERDMAN and Company, with guest artist MERCE CUNNINGHAM	Hunter Playhouse
22	3:00	BENEFIT DANCE RECITAL for the Building Fund Campaign of the 92nd Street YMHA. Participating dancers: Valerie Bettis, Jose Limon, Janet Collins, Katherine Litz, Dudley-Maslow-Bales Trio and New Dance Group. To be held in the Kaufman Auditorium.	
26	8:15	LA MERI and Company	American Museum of Nat. History
28	8:30	IRIS MABRY and Company	Hunter Playhouse
29	8:15	CARMELITA MARACCI and Company	Central H.S. Needle Trades
29	8:30	CHOREOGRAPHERS WORKSHOP: works by Alwin Nikolais, Lydia Joel, Nina Fonaroff, Pauline Koner, Robert Pageant.	Hunter Playhouse

★

LECTURES

in **New York City**

JAN. **6**	8:15	WALTER TERRY on Ethnic Dance	Cooper Union Forum
6	5:00	TANEO on Polynesian Dance	Ethnologic Dance Center
13	8:15	JOHN MARTIN on Modern Dance in the United States	Cooper Union Forum
9	8:40	WALTER TERRY on Dance Immortals: Noverre-Vestris Taglioni"	92nd St. YMHA (demonstrations by Janet Reed and Todd Bollender)
20	4.30	MARI LYNN on Renaissance Phase of Hindu Dance	Ethnologic Dance Center

in **Boston:**

JAN. **6**	8:30 P.M.	MYRA KINCH	Boston Conservatory of Music
16 - 23		BALLETS de PARIS	Boston Opera House

★

In January, La Meri will tour:

9 — Gary, Indiana

10 — Aurora, Ill.

12 — Appleton, Wisc.

★

In January, **BALLET THEATRE** will appear, as follows:

1 - 8	Chicago, Ill.	**24**	Wichita, Kansas
9 - 11	Milwaukee, Wisc.	**25**	Pueblo, Colo.
12 - 13	LaCrosse, Wisc.	**26**	Colorado Springs, Colo.
14	Madison, Wisc.	**27**	Denver, Colo.
16 - 17	Omaha, Nebr.	**28**	Salt Lake City, Utah
18 - 22	Kansas City, Mo.	**30 - 31**	Portland, Oregon
23	Springfield, Mo.		

★

In January, **BALLET RUSSE DE MONTE CARLO** will tour:

2 - 3	New Orleans, La.	**20 - 22**	Milwaukee, Wisc.
4	Memphis, Tenn.	**23**	Indianapolis, Ind.
6 - 7	Lafayette, Ind.	**25**	Dayton, Ohio
9 - 11	St. Louis, Mo.	**26 - 27**	Louisville, Ky.
12	Des Moines, Iowa	**28 - 29**	Cincinnati, Ohio
13 - 15	Minneapolis, Minn.	**30**	Chattanooga, Tenn.
16 - 19	Madison, Wisc.	**31**	Birmingham, Ala.

★

January..**10** The **New York Dance Film Society** will have a special preview of Kathleen Hinni's new movie, "Basic Dance", at its screening at the Ethnologic Dance Center. Other films on the program include THE SINGING EARTH, SONG OF CEYLON, PICTURE IN YOUR MIND.

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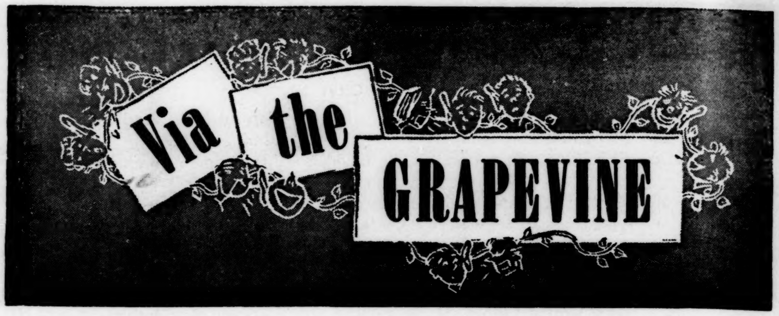


Via the GRAPEVINE

LONDON

The three much-publicized **Nijinsky** benefit galas at London's Empress Hall, at which such alumni as **Toumanova, Chauvire, Massine, Babilee, Skibine, Tallchief** and **Skouratoff** (to say nothing of the Ballet Rambert) appeared, ended in heartburnings and recriminations on all sides. The impresarios reported a loss of 1,400 pounds ($3,920.) and offered Nijinsky a cheque for 132 pounds ($370.). Mme. **Romola Nijinsky** announced in a press interview, **"We have decided that although we need the money, we cannot accept it. We shall give it to the Sadler's Wells Ballet Benevolent Fund."**

When he heard of the fiasco, British dancer **Anton Dolin** phoned Mme. Nijinska and offered to organize a benefit performance for her husband early next year at which all the dancers would give their services free. **"I raised 3,700 pounds (10,360.) for Nijinsky at a single matinee in 1937 and I am sure it can be done again,"** Mr. Dolin announced. **"I was invited to take part in the recent performances but refused because I agreed with Mme. Nijinska that they should have been differently organized. I am very glad to hear that Nijinsky refused to accept the money. It was an insult to offer it to him."**

Impresario **Leon Hepner** explained the loss as follows:
Toumanova, Skibine and **Tallchief** received 400 pounds ($1,120.) between them — out of which they had to supply five costumes. **Jean Babilee** got 100 pounds ($280.). **Massine** was paid 400 pounds to dance in and produce one ballet and had to fetch costumes from New York and pay a performing fee for rights in the ballet (Capriccio, originally done for Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo). **Chauvire, Skouratoff** and Nepo (Chauvire's husband and manager) shared 175 pounds ($490.) and **Marie Rambert** supplied her whole company for 275 pounds ($770.). Rent of Empress Hall was 1,000 pounds ($2,800.); Orchestra, at cost price 635 pounds ($1,778.), publicity, printing, programs and tickets 1,000 pounds ($2,800.), special stage 300 pounds ($840.), lighting 300 pounds ($1,500.). Air fare was paid for continental artists but the airlines allowed a 25% discount.

Tamara Toumanova in the title role of GISELLE, taken in Paris, where the Circle of Dance Critics, founded by Dr. Pierre Tugal, has awarded her its grand prize for her interpretation of this role.

photo by Serge Lido

photo by Serge Lido

Several notables taken in rehearsal for the Nijinsky benefits at Empress Hall in London (see London news report for story). From front to rear: Yvette Chauvire, George Skibine, Tamara Toumanova, Vladimir Skouratoff.

Takings were not disclosed.

And the dancing? Toumanova and Skibine in the DON QUIXOTE pas de deux were the hit number. Chauvire excelled in La Mort du Cygne — but Babilee in L'Apres Midi d'un Faune was disappointing. CAPRICCIO ESPAGNOL, danced by only four couples, looked absurd.

Nijinsky did not go to the galas, but a week later he attended a christening at Tunbridge Wells, Kent, and became godfather to the baby daughter of dancers **John Gregory** and **Barbara Vernon.** The godmother was **Vera Volkova.** Nijinsky also is to be "patron" of the new British School of Russian Ballet (Legat method) which John Gregory and Barbara Vernon have opened in a church hall in Chelsea. **Alicia Markova** and **Anton Dolin** officially opened the school on December 6 and a small reception was given Mme. **Nicolaeva Legat** will teach two "classes of perfection" each week and the daily class will be by Barbara Vernon. **Angelo Andes** will teach Spanish dancing and **Jack Spurgeon** will give double work.

★

Uday Shankar returned to London after many years to give a brief season before departing for New York. With his 13 dancers and musicians he can still create magic and looks only about half his age (he is 50). Nearly every Indian in London attended the crowded **opening performance**, among them **Ram Gopal.** Shankar's seven-year old son, **Ananda,** has no ambitions of becoming a dancer. He first wanted to be a traffic policeman; now declares he will be "a pilot of an aeroplane."

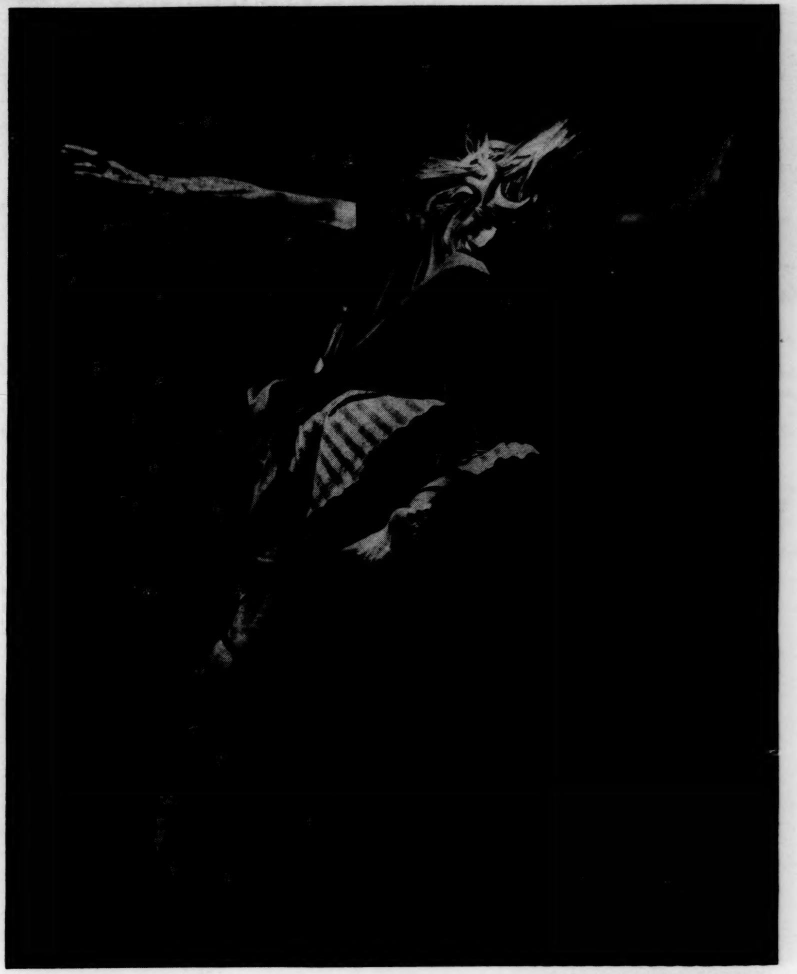
Michael Somes is to create a ballet (his first) for the Sadler's Wells junior company some time in March. **John Cranko,** who returned to England ahead of the company, choreographed his version of BEAUTY AND THE BEAST in time for its scheduled premiere on December 20.

April Olrich also came home at the end of the American (and before the Canadian) tour. She slept for three days (only waking up to eat) and then managed to totter round to class. The rest of the company had only three days holiday before they started rehearsing for their Covent Garden season which opened on December 26 and will continue until June, 1950. During this season some star dancers may make personal appearances on the continent, and of course, the opera company will alternate nights at Covent Garden for at least part of the time. Nevertheless, there is increasing criticism of these long seasons which have an enervating effect on both dancers and audience.

Metropolitan Ballet, the young company of which so much was hoped and for which many American dancers (notably Svetlana Beriosova) have danced, has folded. Director-general Cecilia Blatch announced its demise and then flew off to South Africa. The company remained together long enough to dance Celia Franca's ballet SALOME on television on December 9.

Robert Helpmann is to do the dances in a big new English musical based on the

The Eye of Anguish



Erick Hawkins
as
King Lear
in
"The Eye of Anguish"

THE EYE OF ANGUISH, an opus by Martha Graham, music by Vincent Perischetti and sets and costumes by Charlotte Trowbridge, makes its first appearance in New York on January 22nd, 1950, on the probable opening night of the season of Martha Graham and Company. It is based upon the legend of Lear, a king of ancient Britain, made famous in the play of that name by Shakespeare.

photograph by PHILIPPE HALSMAN, New York

South African Gold Rush which Michael Benthall will produce early in 1950. Audrey Gruddas, who has worked with both Helpmann and Benthall before, will design scenery and costume.

M. C.

★

PARIS

The creations of the **Ballets des Champs Elysees** have not been particularly well received by Paris. One of them, TIL EULENSPIEGEL, a **Jean Babilee** ballet to music of Richard Strauss, is really delightful. The decors and costumes by Tom Keogh are colorful and picturesque; the supporting corps with **Elise Vallee, Deryk Mendel, Danielle Darmance** and **Helene Constantine** dance beautifully, and Babilee himself, as Til, dances and mimes the famous character to perfection. VACATION HOMEWORK (Devoirs de Vacances) gives each member of the ballet an opportunity to do a solo variation, quite uninteresting. THE RADIO REPAIRMAN or Love and Fresh Water, got boos and discouraged Mlle. Darmance so much that she wanted it taken off the program, although it had some refreshing moments. For another ballet, HERODIADE, Hindemith wrote music to a Mallarme poem, and it is danced with considerable gusto by **Natalie Philippart** and **Helene Constantine,** although no one has been able to really find out what it was all about. On the whole I should say that the dancing of the Ballets des Champs Elysees is better than its repertory.

Vicente Escudero has made his first appearance in ten years and the now rather elderly dancer, supported by **Carmita Garcia,** gave a creditable, but not exciting performance. His program modestly declared him to be the only living exponent of the pure Spanish dance. Not even his association with the late Argentina warrants this arrogance — and in several instances, certain movements of the hands, in particular, suggest the Orient, rather than Spain.

Serge Lifar gave a gala at the Palais de Chaillot, at which high spots were **Micheline Bardin** dancing LA MORT DU CYGNE exquisitely and a remarkable pas de deux danced by **Michel Renault** and the new young star of the Paris Opera, **Nina Vyroubova.**

Yvette Chauvire has been engaged by La Scala of Milan for a season of two and a half months. LAC DE CYGNES is one of the ballets she will dance. She will also appear in numerous other Italian cities before going to England and then to South America.

The Municipal Theatre of Strasbourg, whose director is the very able Roger La-

(continued on page 49)

reviewers' stand

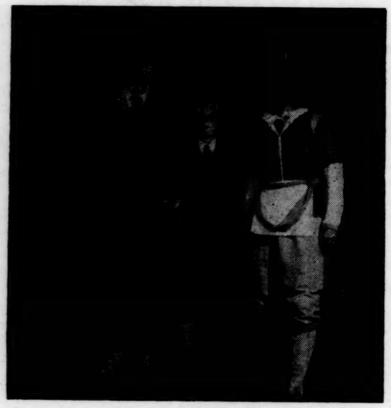
THE theatre, or any art for that matter, is like a game of chance. The audience buys tickets and attends with the imperishable hope of achieving that precious moment of sharing which is genuine artistic experience. But the moment is so rare that most of us accept counterfeits like pathos or amusement in place of the Real Thing.

And so when the Real Thing DOES come along, as in the performance of **Jose Limon** and Company on November 6 at the 92nd Street "Y", we find ourselves doubly humble — doubly grateful. And we are almost unwilling to analyze the precise nature of such an experience. Like love, it is not a combination of factors. It is what happens to them after they have been combined.

The program was no different in content from those presented by the company this summer at the New London Festival. It consisted of two familiar works (LA MALINCHE and THE STORY OF MANKIND) and of the two summertime premieres, INVENTION and THE MOOR'S PAVANE. The dancers were the same — **Jose Limon, Betty Jones, Ruth Currier, Pauline Koner,** and **Lucas Hoving.** And we were presumably no more or less receptive than usual. Yet somehow INVENTION seemed more lucid and glowing than ever, THE MOOR'S PAVANE seemed more monumental and tragic, and LA MALINCHE and THE STORY OF MANKIND had the kind of spontaneity that comes not of improvisation, but of the artists' believing in their dances.

(Editor's Note: Full reviews of the works Moor's Pavane, Invention and La Malinche appeared in the October, 1949 issue of DANCE Magazine)

photo by Serge Lido



Famous painter Andre Derain and his son, Toto, visit Leonide Massine on the stage of the Theatre Sarah Bernhardt in Paris before performance of Massine's GOOD HUMOURED LADIES. New decors for this ballet (repertory of Grand Ballet de Monte Carlo) were by Derain.

With some dancers, the movement sequences and ideas flow as torrentially as words did for Thomas Wolfe. They are fortunate, for their principal creative task lies in pruning and shaping their gifts. They are the so-called natural talents.

But with artists like **Eve Gentry** who gave her first full length concert on November 6 at the Hunter Playhouse, one feels that every movement has been constructed through painstaking synthesis. Hers is the kind of precarious talent that blossoms slowly and must be carefully nurtured lest it fall into platitude.

Her early solos like FOUR WALLS BLUES and BITTER-SWEET BLUES reveal no awareness of her own creative potential and only serve as signposts to show how far Miss Gentry has come in later works like GOODBYE, MY JOHNNY and IN SERENITY REJOICE. Especially in the latter does she achieve the flow and relaxation that differentiate dancing from mere virtuosity.

The only new composition on the program was an excerpt from PATTERN (Marcia Burr), a ballet-in-progress. The dance proposes to chronicle a conventional marital relationship from the time the participants meet as teen-agers until they see their own children growing into adulthood.

The idea is an interesting one and should be highly provocative provided Miss Gentry develops a viewpoint concerning it. At present the dance has two sections, both of which are comparatively literal and have not yet achieved dramatic impulse or a feeling of sequence. Of course, it may very well be that Miss Gentry actually wishes to treat them as two entirely separate vignettes.

The boy-and-girl section was performed with simplicity and straightforwardness by **Rena Gluck** and **Steve Vendola.** Miss Gentry and **Philip Nasta** portrayed the same couple a few years later.

Florence Weber, Marcia Burr, Ernie Lieberman, and Vicki Star provided musical and vocal accompaniments for the concert.

★

Someone should spank **Sybil Shearer.** She has more talent in one foot than most dancers have in their whole bodies. But she is piddling it.

Last year it seemed perfectly legitimate when she sloughed off most of her former repertoire and did a whole program of nameless dances in a tenuous, semi-exalted style. After all, art thrives on experimentation. And Sybil Shearer is kinesthetically interesting no matter what she does.

But enough is enough! One only realized what a useless tangent she has taken when she deviated from the printed program in her November 27 concert at Carnegie Hall and did O, LOST, one of her early solos. Here were all the bite, the surprise, the dry passion that once marked Miss Shearer as one of the chosen. Here was the movement style that should be growing in depth and range to mark Miss Shearer as a leader in an art that can always use them.

Instead, she has slipped further and further out of focus. Her muscular impulses are often more ghostlike than human. There is still much beauty in dances like the Bach Sarabande, the Scarlatti Sonata in D Major, and her last unnamed solo. But this beauty speaks in a whisper to a dedicated handful, instead of calling to the many who first opened their hearts to the Sybil Shearer of five or six years ago.

It almost seems as though the title of her composition, O, LOST, were designed for the Sybil Shearer of today.

★

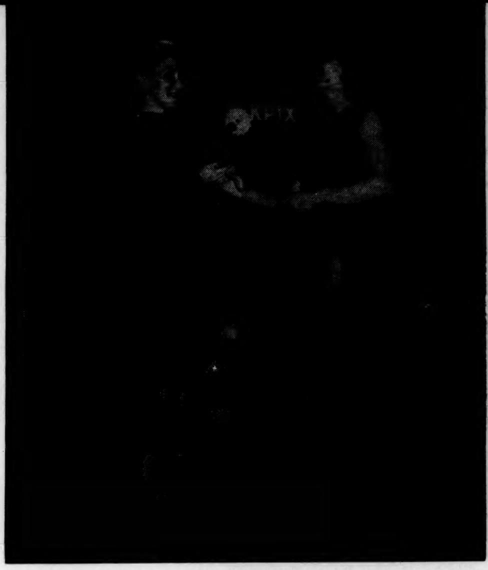
There were two new works on the November 13 program of **Theatre Dance, Inc.** at the 92nd Street "Y". But these were new in name only.

Like many a young choreographer, **Alice Temkin** tried to substitute eagerness for stylistic certainty in her group work, CHARA (Haydn). The result was a great deal of dancing that said very little.

Balanchine's abstract ballets have evidently exercised a strong influence upon Miss Temkin. But she has not learned that despite their choreographic complexity,

(continued on page 38)

JUST PEOPLE and PLACES



DANCE Magazine's San Francisco correspondent, Mme. Beatrice de Baltazar (left) congratulates SOLANA upon her first television show over KPIX in San Francisco.
photo by Robert Shaw

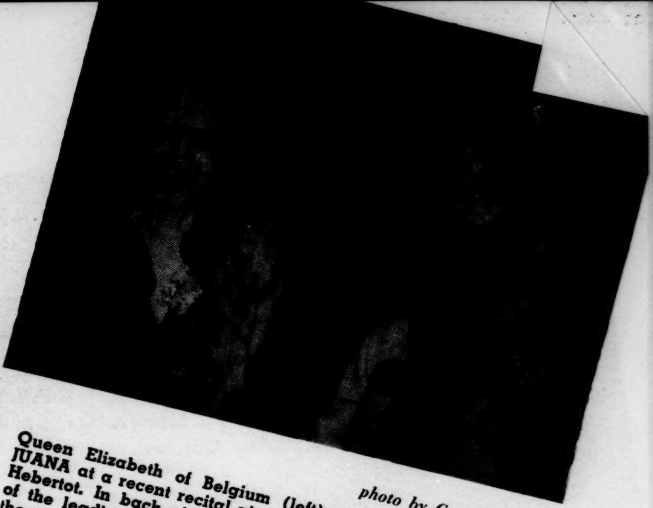
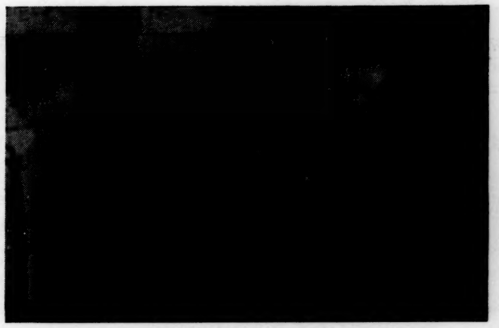


photo by George Philcox

Queen Elizabeth of Belgium (left) greets American dancer JUANA at a recent recital given by her in Paris at the Theatre Hebertot. In back of Juana stands M. Jacques Hebertot, one of the leading spirits and intellectuals of the modern French theatre. M. Hebertot was Juana's sponsor in France.

20th *Century-Fox*



Pastime between ballets — or is it a vocation? Kenneth MacKenzie models head of Bentley Stone in clay.

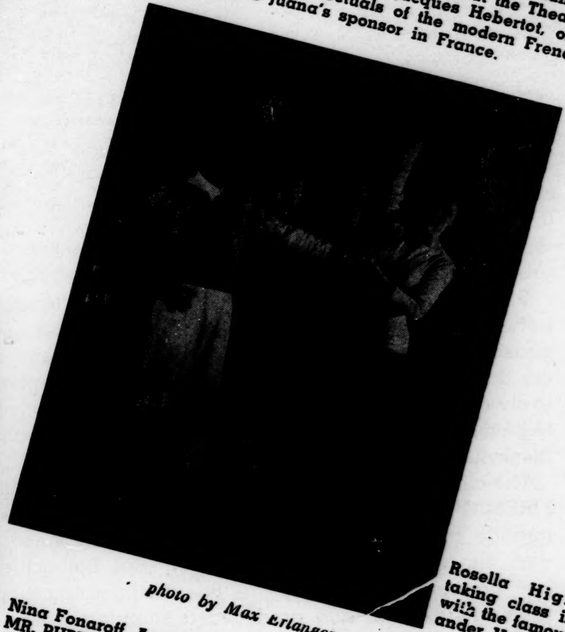
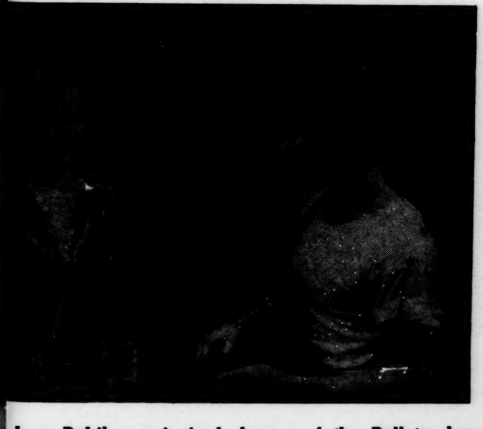


photo by Max Erlanger de Rosen

Rosella Hightower taking class in Paris with the famous Alexander Volinine.

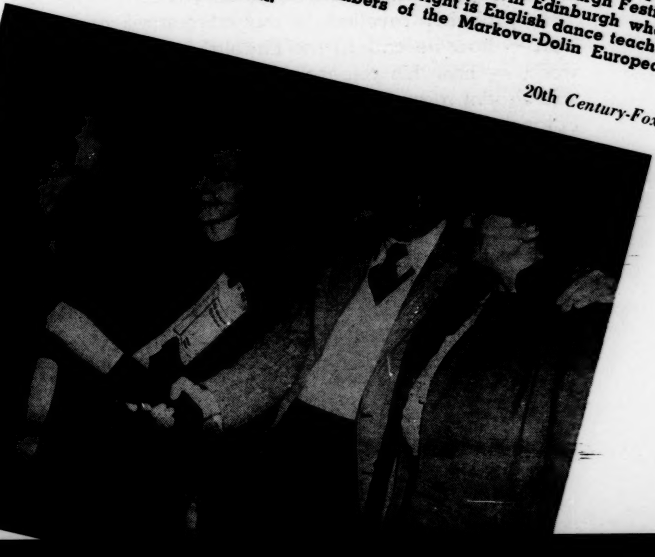
photo by G. B. L. Wilson



Jean Babilee, principal dancer of the Ballets des Champs Elysees, congratulates World Scottish Dancing Champion Grace Boyle in Edinburgh, Scotland during the recent 1949 Festival.

Nina Fonaroff, American dancer and choreographer (left) whose dance play, MR. PUPPET, was performed by Markova and Dolin at the Edinburgh Festival during their European tour, greets the famous dancers in Edinburgh where she visited during recent Festival. The lady at right is English dance teacher, Grace Cone, from whose school members of the Markova-Dolin European company were largely drawn.

20th *Century-Fox*



Doris Hering *sees* . . . . . the season in review . . . .

The *NEW YORK CITY BALLET COMPANY* season, November 24 — December 11, 1949 at the New York City Center.

The **New York City Ballet Company,** which had a lively season from November 24 through December 11 at the New York City Center, is an interesting example of the effect of consistent artistic direction. The company, though young, definitely has a style of its own. This style reflects the background and viewpoint of its Artistic Director, **George Balanchine.**

Although Mr. Balanchine has carefully and intelligently exploited the native speed and high energy of his American dancers, the performances have a tendency toward the sophistication one associates with the Diaghilev Company in the early twenties. And this was precisely when Balanchine was cutting his choreographic teeth under Diaghilev.

But there is, of course, a fundamental difference between this company and Diaghilev's. The latter emphasized the easel painter's art to the detriment of the dancing. But the New York City Ballet is emphatically a dancing company. Here again, this is motivated by Balanchine, who must have seen at first hand the evils of the Diaghilev approach.

The current season produced four premieres of which **FIREBIRD** was the most substantial. FIREBIRD has been through a great deal in the way of revivals since it was first staged by Fokine in 1910. But Balanchine has managed to chip away all this accumulated theatrical encrustation and produced a stunning work — fanciful yet adult, fresh yet evocative.

The secret of his FIREBIRD'S vigor lies in the fact that Balanchine derived his inspiration from so many vivid sources. For example, the FIREBIRD story is probably part of the heritage of his youth.

He probably revelled in the adventures of Prince Ivan — how he caught the Firebird in the enchanted wood — how his release of the bird earned him a subsequent rescue from the demons of the forest. Yes, Balanchine probably believes in the old story, and that's why it makes dramatic sense as he has staged it.

But Balanchine's inspiration is composed of more than just nostalgia. He had **Marc Chagall's** costumes and drops at his disposal. These decorations, originally devised for Ballet Theatre's 1945 version of FIREBIRD, are first rate Chagall. They are dotted with the flying brides and animals of which the painter is characteristically fond, but it is the vibrant color and sense of movement that predominate. There are shades of red riotiously intermingled. There are whole gamuts c pastels. And the costumes range from the jewellik appliqued velvet of the Prince to a veritable bouque of color-splashed muslin for the maidens.

It would be hard to think of a finer piece of theatric music than **Stravinsky's** FIREBIRD score. It has th same combination of naivete and sophistication th makes the sets so right. And it, too, is full of bits c incidental color — the muttering forest music — th orientalism of the dance of the maidens and final It is one of those felicitous scores that give impetus t the movement without driving it.

And as if all that weren't inspiration enough, M Balanchine had the almost frightening technical rang of **Maria Tallchief** at his disposal. Her intense portray of the Firebird set the key for the entire production. seemed as though Balanchine had conjured up terribl technical traps for her, forgetting her as a youn woman and thinking of her as a glittering, magic bird. And Miss Tallchief was caught in the spell. Th strange off-axis turns, the sharp developpes, the drivin jetes, were brilliantly encompassed as she progresse transfixed, through the action. It was the kind of danc ing that Miss Tallchief gave us last year in her memo able Black Swan Pas de Deux with Youskevitch (f Ballet Theatre). It was maddeningly beautiful an somehow not quite human.

But **Francisco Moncion's** Prince Ivan was very huma and despite its modesty, a focal point of the ballet. I pantomime roles like this it is always difficult to kno how much to attribute to the choreographer and ho much to the dancer. Knowing Mr. Moncion's manl dignity in other roles, one can safely say that he adde much individuality to the part. Particularly winnin was his encounter with the maidens and his shy, y purposeful request to dance with his chosen one.

The dances of the maidens were quite unlike an thing we have seen Balanchine do. True, one coul spot his favorite intertwining arms, but they were use in a comradely fashion, rather than decoratively, an melted into gently lilting patterns that were unmistak bly Russian in sentiment and yet entirely free of th jarring "folksiness" of the average ballet charact dances.

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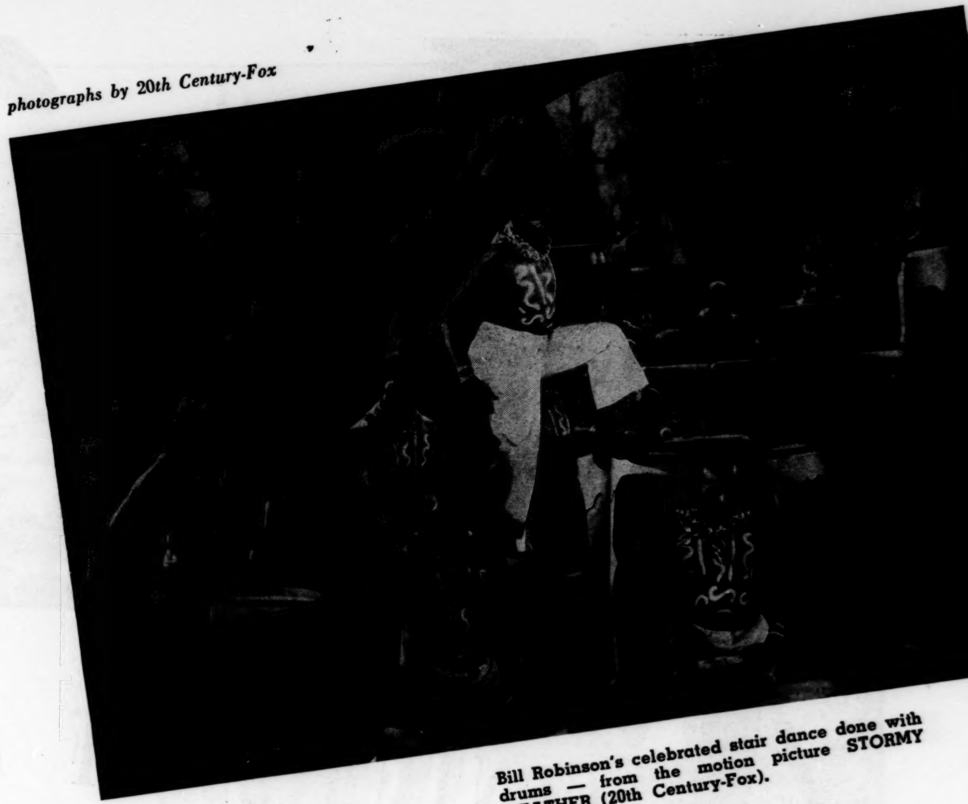
TAPS for Bill Robinson

photographs by 20th Century-Fox



Bill Robinson's celebrated stair dance done with drums — from the motion picture STORMY WEATHER (20th Century-Fox).

BILL ROBINSON, born May 25, 1878, died November 25, 1949.

★

He never got around to starting that dancing school. He said he would stop dancing when he got to be 102, and concentrate on teaching the kids, but time ran out for Bill Robinson at 71.

★

They named him Luther, in Richmond, Va., where he was born. He hated the name. One day when he was eight, he gave his older Brother, Bill, a licking and told him he was taking his name. He offered his brother the name Percy, and that's the name his brother still uses.

The famous nickname, Bojangles, was given him later by a friend, Des Williams. No one knows what it means.

His formal schooling ended when he was six. He never had any dance training; he just did what came naturally — and as a boy danced on Richmond street corners for pennies. Later, as a waiter in the same city, he spilled oyster stew down the neck of one Marty Forkins, and went into his dance to mollify him. Forkins was an agent, and so, Bill said, put him under contract on the spot. He remained his manager for forty years and was at his bedside when he died.

His theatrical earnings went from the $5.00 a week and board he got with Eddie Leonard's minstrel show, THE SOUTH BEFORE THE WAR, to a peak of $6,500. per week in night club and vaudeville engagements.

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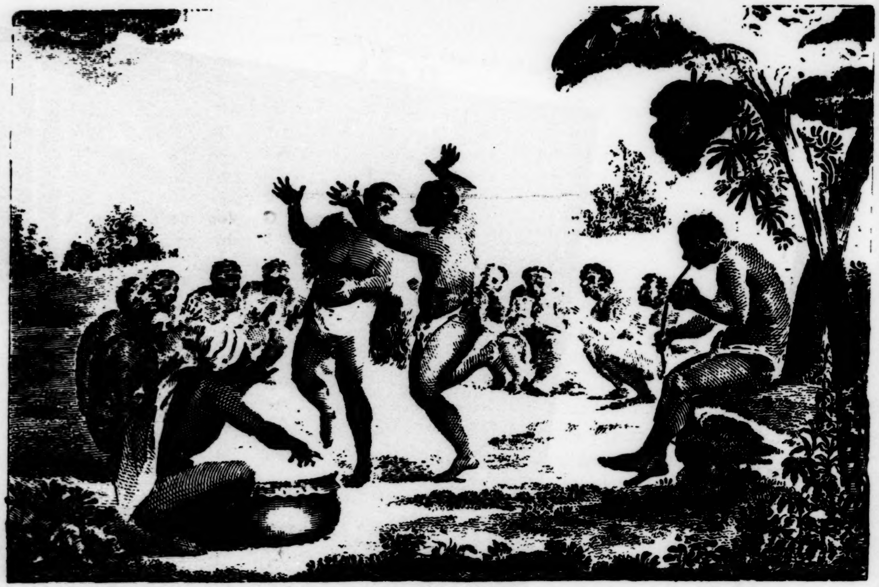
Bill Robinson with Lena Horne in one of his famous dances in 20th Century-Fox's STORMY WEATHER.



In Africa, from which came the Negro, there was an exotic, exciting background and tradition of ritual dances and ring shouts. When the Negro came to America, he brought with him the ancestral memory of elaborate, intricate step dances and the habit of stamping out a beat.

4 CENTURIES OF AMERICA

Chapter III

THE NEGRO FOLK DANCE IN AMERICA

THE dance art of the American Negro, like that of the American Indian, is another important root of our present-day American dance. Though it is often minimized or sometimes over-looked entirely, the American Negro's contributions have exerted a tremendous influence on all the fields and forms of our native dance.

My own first impacts with Negro dance were double-barreled and these, for me, were most fortunate. These two experiences served to introduce me, first, to the primitive aspects that had sprung directly from Africa and, secondly, to one of later forms that had emerged into a crystalized and perfect theatrical form that was truly American. The first of these was Asadata Dafora's production of "Kykunkor" and the second was Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, whom Angna Enters once termed as the greatest dancer she had ever seen.

The first time I saw "Kykunkor" was in 1934 at Asbury Park, N. J., a seaside resort notable for its complete lack of appreciation for dance. As I remember it, it was a sweltering midsummer evening and, as we climbed the steps to the triangular little second floor theatre over a restaurant, we heard the first stacatto drum beats that preceded the rise of the curtain. No sooner were we in our seats than the curtains parted on the tiny stage and there then began one of the most intoxicating performances I've ever witnessed. Drums throbbed, rich, sonorous voices chanted, vivid costumes caught the eye, but, most exciting of all was the savage splendor of Asadata Dafora's group of dancers. "Kykunkor's" plot dealt in part with birth, puberty and marriage rites and so was full of chieftains, witch doctors, warriors and hunters. Their movements were generally large and free and there was a marked use of the torso. Their actual dance patterns ranged all the way from the simplest walking steps to the most incredible feats that were performed with an exacting and precise virtuosity. With the drum rythmns, the sultry heat of the night and the primal dances, Africa right then seemed closer than ever before.

Oddly enough, I saw Bill Robinson, also in Asbury Park, that same summer. "Bojangles", undoubtedly, is one of the great dance personalities of our time and before his first step he won his audience with his infectious ebullience and great natural warmth. After the opening measures of his first number, his onlookers were completely conquered. Robinson's inherent feeling for tempo was apparent in his meticulous taps that were executed with apparently complete physical relaxation. In everything he danced that night he simply radiated rhythm. Though his performance was in exact contrast to "Kykunkor", it was simple to sense that here was one of the direct flowerings that had sprung from the roots of the rich Negro cultural heritage and its

A ANCE

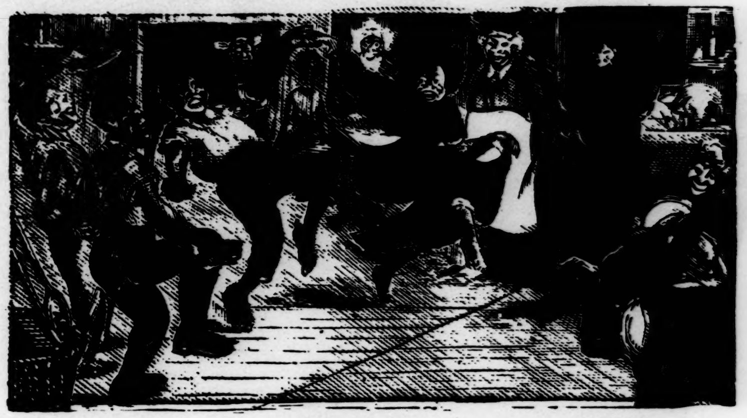
by Arthur Todd

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

The author wishes to express his gratitude to the following individuals and organizations who have assisted in so many ways in the compiling of this material: **Talley Beatty, Katherine Dunham, Martha Graham, Alain Locke** of the Graduate Faculty of Political and Social Science, organized under the New School for Social Research, N. Y., **Pearl Primus, Dr. L. D. Reddick** of the Schomburg Collection, New York Public Library, 135th street branch, N. Y. C., **Carter G. Woodson,** Director, the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, Inc., Washington, D. C. At the end of this chapter there is a brief bibliography.

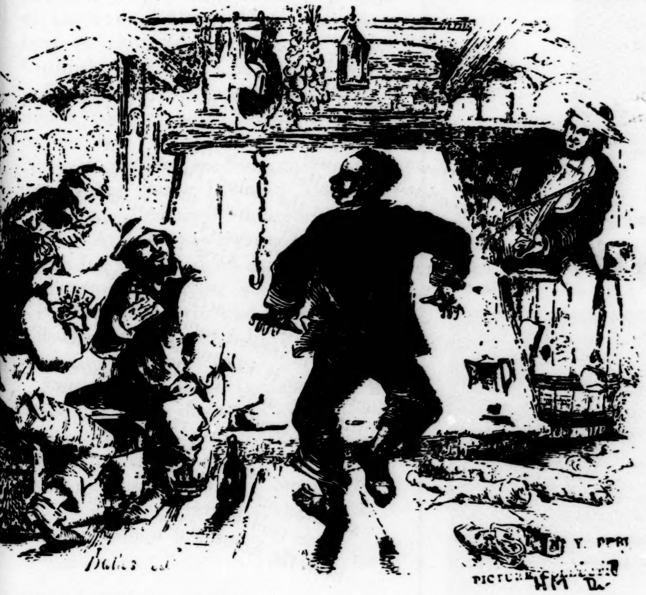
seeds which were early planted in American life.

Though it is not generally known, the first Negroes arrived in America the year before the pilgrims landed on Plymouth Rock. To be exact, these Negroes sailed into Jamestown Bay in a slave ship that set anchor in the harbor in 1619. Unlike the Pilgrims, however, they had not chosen to come to this new land of so-called freedom but were sold as slaves and transported here against their will. However, it is to the everlasting credit of the Negro that he not only managed to survive but that, in addition, he has given so much, so freely to American arts and culture.



Though the earliest Negro dances in America contained overtones of African circle dances and ring shouts, the Negro was also inventive in introducing new characteristics into his dances.

Such early Negro folk dances as the Virginia Hoe-Down (or Breakdown) contained the elements of the fusion of the Negro and White cultures.

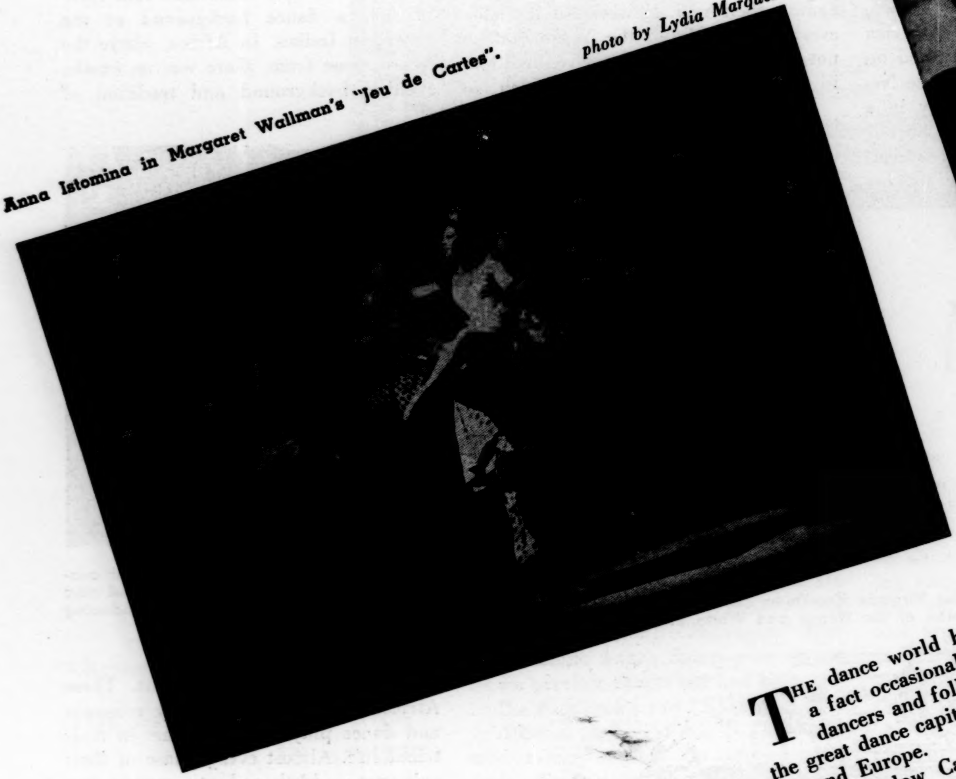


The first Negro Americans had fully as rich a dance background as the American Indian. In Africa, where the Negro came from, there was an exotic, exciting background and tradition of ritual dances and ring shouts. These African Negroes were deeply religious and dance played a vital part in their tribal life. Almost every phase of their existence — birth, puberty, mating, fertility and death — was bound up in dance celebrations. In Africa, they danced, stamped and shook to the violent, frenzied beat of tomtoms or to the rhythmic clapping of hands and shouting of the tribesmen. When the Negro came to America, he brought with him the ancestral memory of elaborate, intricate step dances and the habit of stamping out a beat to a 2/2 or 4/4 rhythm.

As Martha Graham expresses it, "the Negro dance is a dance towards freedom, a dance to forgetfulness, often Dionysiac in its abandon and the raw splendor of its rhythm." During his

(Continued on page 41)

Margaret Wallman, permanent choreographer and director attached to the Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires.



Anna Istomina in Margaret Wallman's "Jeu de Cartes". *photo by Lydia Marquez*

BALLET *Under Capricorn*

South America Has Its Ballet Capital At Buenos Aires

THE dance world has many orbits, a fact occasionally overlooked by dancers and followers of dance in the great dance capitals of North America and Europe.

Down below Capricorn, in the Argentinean capital of Buenos Aires flourishes a ballet which has a year-round season at the Colon Theatre, and which boasts a permanent director and choreographer, Margaret Wallmann, who came to Buenos Aires from Europe twelve years ago.

Mme. Wallman's accomplishment in Argentina is indeed something to shout about, when it is considered that there is little, if any, subsidy for ballet in Argentina, and that a ballet school had to be founded and reared in order to bring the Colon's ballet to its present standing in world ballet.

For twelve years now the Colon ha been the home of the attached school the Municipal Ballet, considered by many European and North American visitors one of the best in the world. It has produced some fine native talent, including the soloists Ciro di Pardo, Jorge Tomin, Victor Ferrari, Enrique Lommi and others.

Mme. Wallman has a resident company of 100 trained and disciplined dancers. Starting with a repertoire of eight ballets, she has in the repertory today a complement of more than *fifty* ballets, both traditional and modern. She has inspired native Argentinean composers to write special scores for ballets, to such an extent that these composers have attained a fame outside Argentina, specifically, Juan Jose Castro and Alberto Ginastera (whose music has been heard at the Venice Festival).

At Mme. Wallman's invitation, the Colon has seen such guest choreographers as Leonide Massine, David Lichine, George Balanchine, Bronislava Nijinska. Likewise famous dancers, such as Shabelevsky have made the Colon their home during the past years. Anna Istomina has made a great name at the Colon, and likewise, Tamara Grigorieva, who has settled in Argentina, is a soloist at the Colon.

The Colon has also housed guest companies, like the Original Ballet Russe. In 1947 Lichine danced in his own THE PRODIGAL SON, and in his sequel to GRADUATION BALL, called A CHILD'S DREAM, which has been produced only at the Colon.

During Mme. Wallman's absence last year when she was guest choreographer at La Scala, Milan, the Colon played host to choreographers Aurel Millos, Ciplinsky and Leticia de la Vega.

Buenos Aires is indeed hospitable to dance, whether ballet, modern, concert or national dance. Miriam Winslow, North American modern dancer from the United States has had a resident company of modern dancers here in Buenos Aires for several years and audiences for this kind of dance are eager and growing. Artists such as Harald Kreutzberg, Rosario and Antonio, Carmen Amaya and others have also found a willing audience here.

Buenos Aires looks forward with anticipation to the day when exchanges of ballet companies will make it possible for it to see the great companies of North America, England, France, Italy and in exchange the company which it proudly calls it own.

Marvin Hare

photo by Schulmann

Yurek Shabelevsky dancing in the Argentinian ballet "Cuento de Avril", choreography by Margaret Wallman, at the Colon in Buenos Aires.

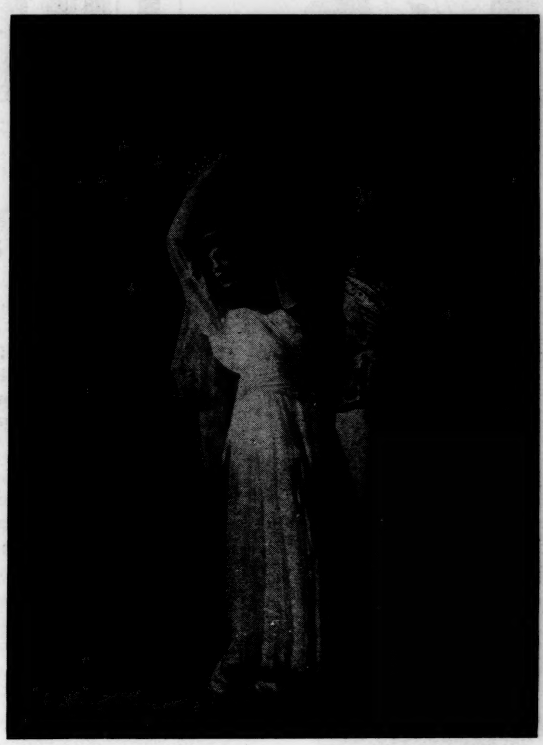


photo by Thorlichen

Tamara Grigorieva and Ciro di Pardo in Margaret Wallman's "Passacaglia".

Jorge Tomin in Margaret Wallman's ballet "Apurimac", based on ethnic Argentinian themes.

photo by Lydia Marquez

2 points

in this corner

THE DANCER

the attack by William Chappell

illustration by DOUG ANDERSON

THIS is an excerpt from WILLIAM CHAPPELL'S "STUDIES IN BALLET", published by John Lehmann, Ltd., London. Permission to reprint granted by author and publisher.

THERE once existed in a dream world, a female character, brought into being with many others, by the fertile and capricious imagination of Frederick Ashton and Robert Helpmann, during the prewar days of the Sadler's Wells Ballet Company.

This woman — one of a crowd of semi-solid ghosts, who, in those far-off lotus eating days inhabited our primitive world, each being endowed with the detailed characteristics appertaining to real people, having names, habits, ways of dressing, and ideas of taste all their own — this particular woman, a Mrs. Beesley, lived, if I remember rightly, in Birmingham, and was a ballet fan of the most ardent variety, who thought nothing of paying a special visit to London for every new production. She had a predilection for a phenomenal form of technical monstrosity known as tap-on-the-points. She also cared deeply for Swan Lake, Act Two.

Apart from her eulogies concerning these two widely different forms of the balletic art, there was a certain monotony about the opinions she freely expressed to us at the stage door after the first night of a new work. She rarely, if ever, appeared to receive any satisfaction from the ballets she saw, and invariably preceded her criticisms with a phrase so personal to her that it had made us almost convinced of her existence. "H'm-m-m", she would say, in the dry adenoidal tones with which Robert Helpmann had endowed her. "Seem to have seen it somewhere before."

That the foibles of this imaginary and eccentric character could have any bearing on the work of the contemporary writers on the ballet might appear a far-fetched idea; but, in possessing strong personal opinions, a destructive rather than a constructive attitude, and a tendency blithely to dismiss work that did not happen to appeal to her own taste, while she overpraised her pet dancers and choreographers, she bore a strange resemblance to many of the new team of writers on the ballet whom I found, on my return to England after the war, accepted as authoritative critics on this most specialized of the arts.

If one can place faith in the dictionary definitions of the word "critic", Mrs. Beesley had strong claims to be

(*Continued on page 34*)

view....

in this corner

THE CRITIC

the counterattack by A. V. Coton

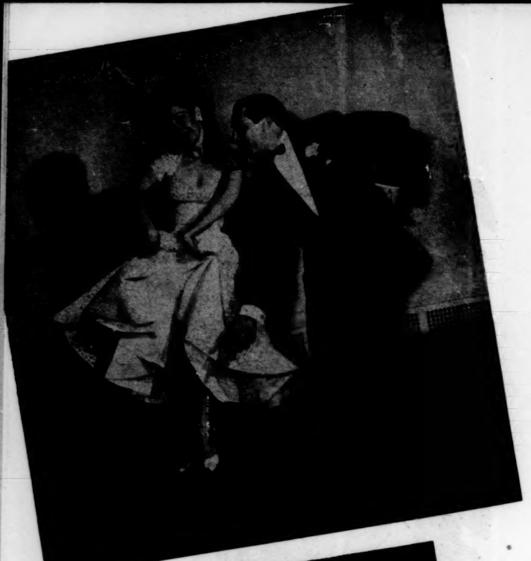
To the critic's ear, sweeter than the voice of the first cuckoo in Spring, are those soothing syllables of approval about his judgments to which his fans sometimes give utterance; but his fans are so few in number that the plaudits he receives are fewer in any year than the number of cuckoos nesting in his backyard. His compensation comes from the second sweetest noise he knows, and that is the shriek of indignation wrung from some artist or near-artist who has just perused a criticism of his work: for the shriek is evidence that the criticism is being read by the person at whom it is primarily directed, and who — in the long run, and while he remains literate — can reap some direct benefit from the criticism. Apart from a handful of artists of the top rank, few people who create or interpret works of art allow themselves to understand the nature of the critic and the value of criticism. By defining the several kinds of artists and critics we may shed some light upon a dark place, and this will be to the advantage of all of us concerned with questions of the arts and their criticism.

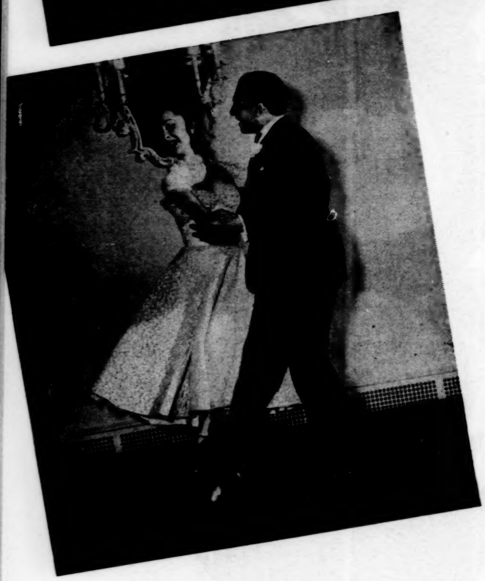
When Aeschylus, the Greek dramatist, first wrote a play with two principal characters exchanging dialogue, he broke for ever the convention that a play should consist of song-and-dance numbers compèred by a verse narrator; but there is no doubt that some critic of the day wrote a notice pouring scorn on upstart dramatists who tampered with sacred institutions — and probably wound up his diatribe with an analysis of the new dramaturgy in which he proved that three characters would be better than a mere duet! Nobody could blame the infuriated playwright if he retaliated by attacking the critic for his lack of taste (the oldest below-the-belt punch known to criticism), and his general ignorance about everything to do with the Theatre. Between critic and artist there are few periods of armistice and a permanent state of cold war between them is the healthiest possible condition for the arts. By maintaining his detachment the critic stresses the fact that he and the artist are working towards a common end, but by different means; jointly they are responsible for making, spreading, and encouraging interest in, works of art.

One day the critic defends tradition, provided he feels that the tradition is giving something to the living art; the next day he can by-pass traditional practices and spread hot propaganda for the newest idea, the freshest experi-

(*Continued on page 34*)

illustration by ***DOUG ANDERSON***





6 illustrations by SALLY and TONY de MARCO of the BALLROOM BAMBUCO. Study text for instruction.

The BAMBUCO

a Colombian dance for the American Ballroom

by Albert and Josephine Butler

as demonstrated by

the de MARCOS

It used to be that coffee and emeralds were the chief exports of Colombia. To these two precious commodities now add a third — the *Bambuco* — as thrilling a dance rhythm as ever has tantalized your feet.

Bambuco is the music and dance of the Colombian *Mestizo*. Indian and Spanish influences fuse to produce a music which is strangely subtle and electrifying. We could say the *Bambuco* is fascinating, bewitching, enchanting — but it is simpler and more to the point to say that it just gets under your skin.

The story of the *Bambuco* follows the pattern of the origin and evolution of any authentic social dance. The music is first the essence of the people of the soil. It is their gaiety, their sadness, their aspirations. The dance is a dance of courtship. The boy advances, the girl retreats, and the end of the dance always finds

---

How to dance the BA

The **Bambuco** is a dance of gaiety and of lightness of step. It can be described as **Samba** in Waltz rhythm. While its musical time signature is ¾, actually it is an interesting combination of ¾ (melody) and 6/8 (accompaniment).

As played in typical style, this 6/8 rhythmic accompaniment permits and suggests an unusual timing of step rhythm. While three steps or weight changes are made to this 6/8 measure, the timing is uneven in that the weight changes take place on beats 1, 4, 5. The first or main step thus uses up the first three beats and a delayed but rapidly executed ball change takes place in the second half of the measure on beats 4, 5.

This of course is a strict interpretation. For practical dance purposes this timing can be simply counted as Slow . . . Quick, Quick, or One . . . Two, Three; One . . . Two, Three.

As a purely social dance, three popular ways to use the basic step are here described. (1) Right and Left Turns, (2) Forward or Backward Broom Step **(Escobillado)**, (3) The Redowa Step (our own term used for the sake of familiar comparison).

NOTE: **In all three steps described the first step dominates the travel action. The body weight stays over this foot for the three counts.**

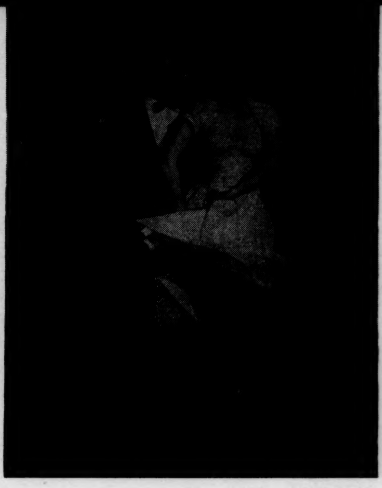
BASIC STEP

Count 1 .... S .... L F .... Fwd
2 .... Q .... R F .... Slightly Swd, and lightly placed
3 .... Q .... L F .... Pulls inward Twd R F

Count 1 .... S .... R F .... Bwd
2 .... Q .... L F .... Slightly Swd, and lightly placed
3 .... Q .... R F .... Pulls inward Twd L F

STEP #1 — LEFT AND RIGHT TURN

Left Turn
Same as above, turning Left — Repeat ad lib



photographed at the
Plaza Hotel, New York
exclusively for
DANCE MAGAZINE
by **Irwin Dribben**

them together. Then the city people see the dance, hear the music, find it all charming, and appropriate the folk rhythm as a salon dance — of course modifying the dance to suit the ballroom.

In Colombia the *Bambuco* is danced today both in the field of the countryside, and in the ballrooms of the cities. In its folk form it is usually danced as a couple dance, to the accompaniment of the Guitar, the *Tiple*, a Guitar-like instrument, and the *Bandola*, a sort of Mandolin. The girl is dressed in the colorful native costume of embroidered cotton blouse, worn to show her pretty shoulders, and a long full skirt, brightly striped at the bottom. The boy wears a shirt and long tight pants. Hanging from his belt is his *Machete*. On their sleek black hair both wear Panama hats with shawls underneath. And both may be barefooted. While they dance the boy sings, the girl answers in song. Even in this song of courtship the words may be melancholy, for the Indian is sober even in his happiness.

In the cities of Colombia, the *Bambuco* enjoyed its greatest vogue some twenty

(Continued on page 40)

ALROOM *Bambuco*

Right Turn
Same as Left Turn, starting with R F Fwd on Count 1; L F Bwd to start second measure — Repeat ad lib

Count 1 .... S .... L F .... Fwd
2 .... Q .... R F .... Short step Fwd, ball of foot lightly placed
3 .... Q .... L F .... Pulls up to heel of R F

STEP #2 — "ESCOBILLADO" OR BROOM STEP

In the Escobillado, the basic step is used to progress forward, with either man or his partner facing the line of direction.

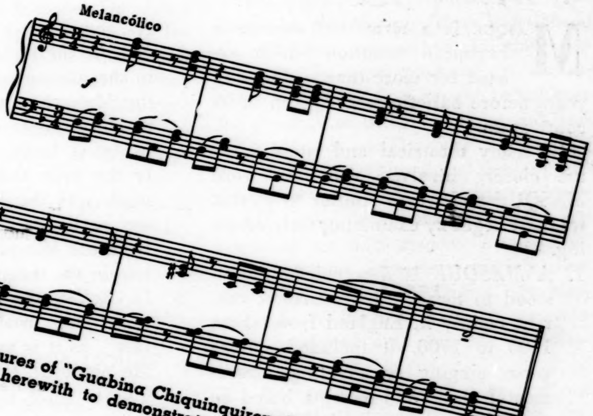
Count 1 .... S .... R F .... Fwd
2 .... Q .... L F .... Short step Fwd, ball of foot lightly placed
3 .... Q .... R F .... Pulls up to heel of L F

Repeat ad lib

STEP #3 — REDOWA

Count 1 .... S .... L F .... Swd
2 .... Q .... R F .... Lightly, in back of L F
3 .... Q .... L F .... Pulls slightly to the Rt
Count 1 .... S .... R F .... Swd
2 .... Q .... L F .... Lightly, in back of R F
3 .... Q .... R F .... Pulls slightly to the Lt

Repeat ad lib



1st 8 measures of "Guabina Chiquinquirena", a Colombian BAMBUCO, illustrated herewith to demonstrate the tempo to which this dance is played.

The **BAMBUCO** is available in records made by **DECCA**. Sheet Music is available from Peer International Corporation, New York City.

COMUS

"The Masque of Comus" by John Milton has been choreographed for modern ballet by Mona Inglesby for the International Ballet of England. Here is another example of the evolutionary use of masque in ballet.

Masque is a term that denotes a European tradition which existed for more than a thousand years before ballet emerged, even in its court form.

So many theatrical and ritual ideas are closely involved with the word MASQUE and words similar to it, that we must begin by examining their meaning.

1. A *MASQUE* is now chiefly understood to mean a performance, current mainly in England from about 1500 to 1700. It included spoken verse, singing or chanting, instrumental music and dancing based on a secular or mythological theme.
2. *MASQUERADE,* or masquerade ball: a development at a later period (1600 to 1900) at which citizens gather, more or less in disguise, to enjoy themselves at seasonal entertainments, in music and dance. Masquerade is used also to denote an outdoor assembly of persons (Ridotto) wearing masks, for dancing.
3. *MASQUER* or Masker: the person taking part, usually one of the dancers, sometimes a visitor.
4. *MASK*: the facial disguise used (a) in the masquerade ball; and (2) in the Masque entertainment, to cover the face. There was a half-mask (in its latest form) that covered merely the eyes and cheeks. This half-mask was the slight cover used in the early ballet. It was inherited from the Masque; discarded as useless in the theatre.
5. *In Ballet,* the word mask is now sometimes used to denote "stage face", as it is made-up, and further, the mode of expression. It is used also to refer to the metallic Greek mask; or the plaster death mask. Finally it means the papier-mache half-face, sometimes used on the stage, sometimes used by small boys, to assume a character. The muzzle of a fox (or other animal, e. g. in THE SLEEPING BEAUTY ballet) is also termed a mask.

The tradition of the Masque affirms the central or thematic factor we see in ballet namely, the emphasis upon the character assumed. Beginning in the solemn ritual, the practice now accentuates the "decor of character" which balanced the "decor of place". In its later theatrical use the Masque included all the costume, make-up and properties that combine to present a single character. But the reference to pageantry includes the whole performance as a Masque. In it the actors and dancers essentially agree to sink their entire personality behind their assumed character. And so — *this* is a contrast with certain types of *commercial* ballet.

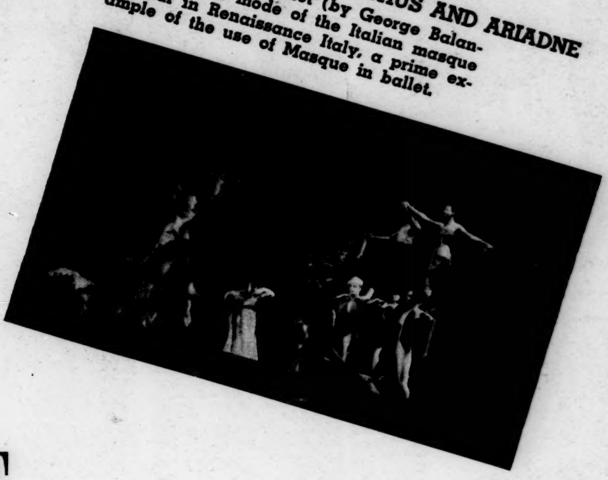
THE SOCIAL MASQUE

Unless we consider the Social Masque, particularly during the Renaissance period, we shall not understand how ballet grew out of pre-theatrical form of the Town Masque. The display arises in two relatively simple social facts — the relations of Power and Prestige.

All social power is derived from economic power. We must not forget that the idea of commercial banks came from Italy. This ownership hinges on policies, what to do with it, how to use it, and where to expend it. These de-

The MASQUE in BALLET

by W. G. Raffé

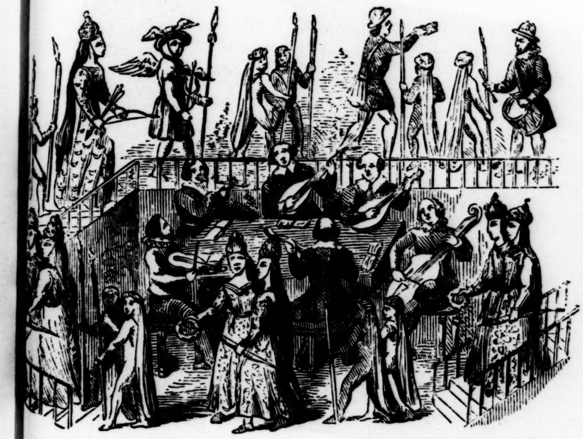


THE TRIUMPH OF BACCHUS AND ARIADNE
A contemporary ballet (by George Balanchine) in the mode of the Italian masque popular in Renaissance Italy, a prime example of the use of Masque in ballet.

cisions, in sum, are called "politics" and they originate from men's group or social desires.

From this social equation came the Renaissance Masque: the ruling class desired to express its dual facets of power and prestige. The dukes and the *condottiere* of the numerous Italian communes gathered their wealth by guile or by force, so they wanted to display possession especially at the family celebrations, or at local festivals. In some opposition arose claims of the Roman church; at the other end, were the people, without whose work no economic power is possible. The people, who alone provided the economic end, who did all the work, who made the buildings, who did the painting and carved the sculpture, who devised the grand pageants, cooked the ducal dinners and, who having done all this (and paid for it!) stood around to cheer! The consummation of all this ducal festivity was the Ducal Masque. The dukes and their families appeared in or before the Masque. At a time when ladies did not appear on any public stage, they took leading characters in the Masque; just a little later in history, kings appeared with their ladies in the Court Ballet.

The Italian Masque was propaganda, sycophantic boasting of the local Duke.



ENGLISH COURT MASQUE
The Italian entertainment mode of masque was merged in the 15th century in London with the older English masque of the TWELVE NIGHTS. Here Greek mythology has banished the "King of the Mount" and instead we have Mercury (or Hermes).

It was not art for art's sake, nor art for sale. The organizers of a Masque had to use those dances and songs which were available—or invent new music—with the instruments known at the time. Popular dances were smoothed down to make court dances ("Every pavanne has its galliard"), just as popular music was adapted to hymnal tunes.

The high point of spectacle in those days was the Masque. Here it balanced the religious processions and their display, but by every mode of art, the artists, Vasari tells us, sought to enhance the prestige of the noble duke and thus to display his social power. The American economist, Thorstein Veblen, has described the outcome of this tendency in his books. It led directly to the baroque in art and thence — to Ballet. When Masque became produced commercially, it led to the Opera. The Masque was, in its best sense, an amateur show produced only for one performance.

In Europe people danced in and out of all these festivities with immense zest and unwearied feet, interrupted only by the great disasters of famine and plague in the 13th and 14th centuries, and by the wars of the Church, which depopulated first Provence and later Germany, Bohemia, Spain and lastly France.

From these conditions came the revised popular Masque of Death which Hans Holbein (and many other artists)

(*Continued on page* 37)

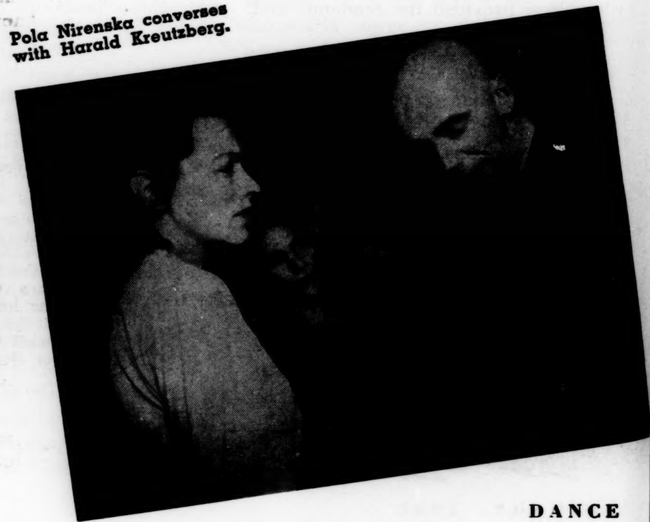
Mary Wigman and Harald Kreutzberg (center), Rosalia Chladek (left), Hans Zullig (in back) and Kurt Jooss (right). This quintet of great German dancers and teachers met at Zurich, Switzerland in August, 1949, where this photo of them was taken. Jooss and Zullig are currently reviving the Jooss School at Essen; Chladek is dancing and teaching in Vienna; Wigman, in Berlin; and Kreutzberg is on a world tour.

German dance REVIVES

IN August, 1950, Zurich, Switzerland, will be the meeting place of the 5th Congress of International Dance, a place where teachers and dancers from every part of the world may convene to study under masters like Wigman, Kreutzberg, Jooss. The Congress is officially sponsored by the Society of Dance and Gymnastics Teachers of Switzerland.

The first of these conventions was held at Zurich in 1946. Their significance is not that they are conventions, not that they are held in neutral Switzerland, nor that an international student body is thither attracted. The true significance lies in the renaissance of Central European dance art — in the reemergence of Mary Wigman, the re-appearance of Harald Kreutzberg, the blossoming of Chladek as teacher and choreographer, and most significant, the return to Germany of Kurt Jooss and Hans Zullig. Thus the disintegrated atoms reassemble after the storm and in their various centers, Jooss and Zullig in Essen, Wigman in Berlin, German dance is resuscitated and promises to bloom again. The systems of dance taught by these individuals are dissimilar but the principal spirit, that which produced these artists, is eternally the same and has, since the end of the war, made itself felt in Germany, as well as in the annual congress at Zurich, where these accompanying photographs, taken in 1949, were made.

A classroom at the 1949 Congress of International Dance at Zurich, with MARY WIGMAN (center) in the lead. On the left, Hilda Baumann; on the right, Pola Nirenska.



Pola Nirenska converses with Harald Kreutzberg.

toward another dimension in dancing

an understanding —
by DALE EDWARD FERN

a photographic study by Helen Morrison

The face of SYBIL SHEARER

SYBIL SHEARER

YOU may read what John Martin in New York thinks of her. You may read what Claudia Cassidy and Margaret Lloyd think of her work in Chicago and Boston. The KENYON REVIEW has taken a point of view toward her. There is a modest compilation of critiques titled simply SYBIL SHEARER which is available from the Kamin Dance Bookshop in New York — a sizeable enough bibliography for so young an artist in so unliteral a field as dance.

But read them all, if you will, and you will not know Sybil Shearer.

It is not uncommon to find that many persons about whom a considerable volume of material has been put to paper are in no way translatable to a vernacular of critics, or reporters, or even those writers whose work honestly achieves the sphere we call poetry. Mozart, Emily Dickinson, Eleonora Duse, and Albert Schweitzer are a varied sort of what I mean. There is an area of living that is only partly living and that is reserved for only a few. ". . . . to apprehend the point of intersection of the timeless with time" is indeed their business and we suffer miserably at trying to speak of it, and it is the grossest sort of vanity to attempt its analysis and criticism. There is a level of achievement beyond the domain of our critics, though it is not fashionable today to acknowledge the fact.

I have seen Sybil Shearer dance, and what that experience was I have never read of. It is difficult to say whether that is because those who have written of her work do not find in it what I do or that they are at an equal loss for words to say it. But at least, it seems, they could acknowledge their own strain and imprecision.

Of her faults, the few and surface ones, they might make just comment. The music for her work, both in its selection and in its performance, is often below the level of inspiration and validity which infests her dancing. Her costuming likewise falls short of her intention of universality. She is invariably placed in time, and usually in place, and that is all wrong for Sybil Shearer. Isadora was derivative of Athens and the ideally conceived America, Harald Kreutzberg of Tyrol and a collection of legendry. And Martha Graham from some "cave of the heart" that is as cardiac as it is recessive. And they all costumed themselves in such accord. Sybil Shearer, unfortunately, does not fit so well. The elements cannot be disciplined nor made specific nor harnessed to an average comprehension of their ruthlessness and beauty.

There is a faction which believes she can be drab and plain, and they refer to her hair and face. Her function is dancing, and her hair is an integral part of it

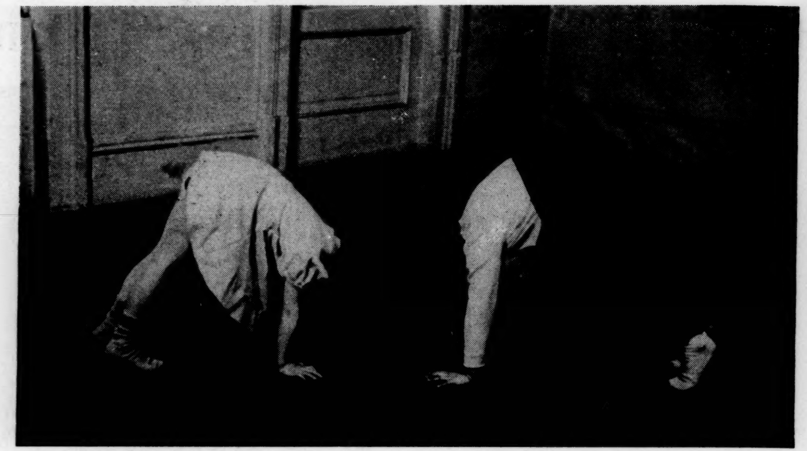
(Continued on page 42)

Who is EVERYBODY?

the 3 to 5 year old in dancing class

article VII of the series "THE CHILD'S WORLD"

by Blanche Evan



"The 3 to 5 year old group can learn a great deal about rhythm and functional exercises . . ."

WE were sitting in a circle on the floor: a group of ten children, three to five years old. "Everybody please do this", I requested, as I demonstrated a movement. No one moved. "Who is everybody?" I asked. No one answered. "Who IS everybody?", I questioned. "ME, . . and her, and her, and her, . . ." a three and a half year old replied, pointing with precision to each and every child in turn.

The pronouns "me" and "I" can be heard fifty times in an hours' class: "Watch *me*", "*I* did it better than she did it", etc. There seem to be specific devices known to childhood to direct attention to the "me": one child will pull a circle to pieces, or form a little gang, another will do any exercise other than the one you've designated, another will refuse to do anything at all. Whereas in a five to seven year old group, you may find two out of fifteen behaving in this manner, in the three to five group, the behavior described is typical of many.

In this age group, the world starts with "Me" and centers around "Me". At one extreme we have the child who shouts "Me *first*" as she pushes others out of her way, and at the other, the child who, in learning about "Us" and "All together", is so struck with the idea, that she repeatedly asks, "Me, too? Me, too?"

Who is this little "me"? In a lesson in basic contrasts, I asked the four year olds to do "a big, strong dance"; and to stimulate response, I posed the question, "Whom do you know who is big and strong?" — thinking, myself, in terms of Giants, Policemen, Daddys, etc., — when the tiniest, timidest child rang out her answer "ME". For a year, this child had spent much of her class time withdrawn, sucking her thumb. At this point, she stepped forth into a strong improvisation, charged with energy and rhythmic intensity.

The child at this age changes continually depending on the influences she is exposed to. She is a little person trying desperately to find her place in the world, adapting, and adopting, different attitudes and behaviors, to accomplish the task. The same child who is shy in the presence of a group, may be seemingly free at home; the disrupter in your class may be a "model" child at home or in a group differently constituted from yours. Furthermore, although the child's world is minute in perspective, potentially she is capable of as yet undefined ability.

The "Me" that presents itself, should be exposed to every constructive stimulus. If we teach the child on the level of the surface "me", we are guilty of encouraging the child's negative qualities and attitudes, at a time when, with comparative ease, they can be redirected to the positive. Furthermore, if you

all photographs by FRED FEHL

accept the "me world" as ultimate, you will have to pare down the wide field of Dance to a minute, individualistic level. You will have to distort your subject. Knowledge is a social entity. The child can become a recipient of knowledge if her potentials are externalized and her little word broadened. Exposed to a well organized group, the little child eventually realizes that others of her age share her fears, and her joys, her inadequacies and her prowess. The tiny mite who did the "big, strong dance" released a flow of self-confident movement among her classmates.

THE *major pedagogic problem* in this age group of three to five years is to establish a positive social relation that ties together children, teacher, and the work at hand, changing the center of attention from a little dot in a big world, to a world just right in size.

METHODS

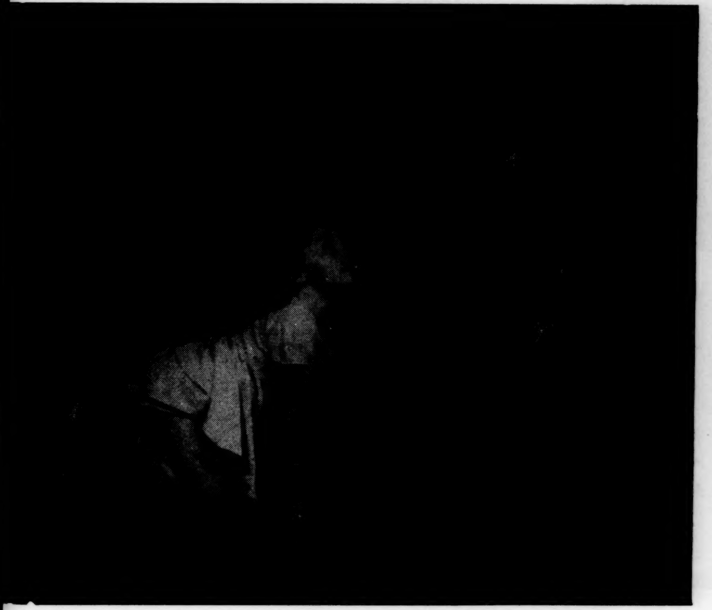
Simple group formations offer one means of establishing such a relation. The circle, holding hands, is the most effective and easiest "Us" form. It is secure, everybody can see everybody all at once, and the "Me" belongs. The circle form is much easier to grasp than a line form, in which the "Me" sees no reason for retaining a set place

(*Continued on page* 44)

Improvising: What do they feel?

". . . fear clouds the face of this child . . ."

Improvising.



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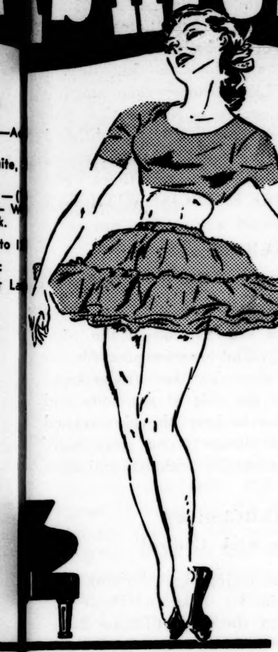

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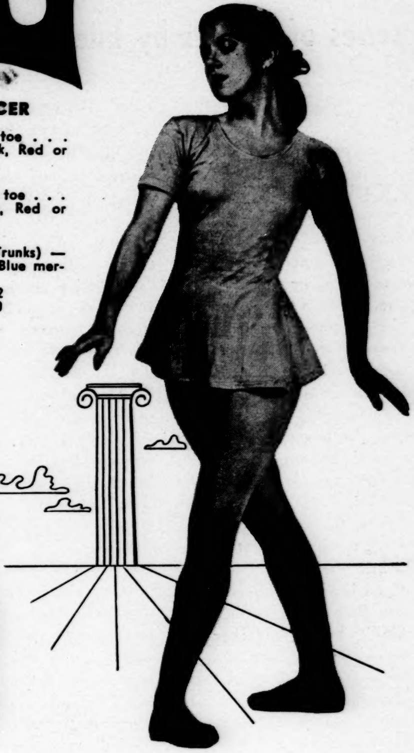

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FLEXING FOR BALLET

a series of articles by Eileen O'Connor

Chapter X

CONTROL EXTENSIONS

For years Ballet students have spurned the art of Acrobatic dancing . . . even the mention of it is enough to curl their lips in distaste, while the thought of studying it never entered their pretty heads. However, the old classic choreography of LAC DES CYGNES, GISELLE, AURORA'S WEDDING, and many other beautiful ballets, demands high extensions and facile control.

It is not enough to practise the regulation *Grands Battements* and *Développés* of the Ballet class. In order to get the thighs stretched, and the back limbered, and the turn-out free, to perform the Adagio balances in any of these Ballets, the student-dancer *must* turn to Acrobatic exercises. I do not mean to imply that you henceforth must walk on your hands in your Ballet-class, or do "flip-flops" and "butterflies" while the teacher demonstrates an Arabesque. No, I only wish to show you how a few exaggerated or extreme versions of your familiar Bar-exercises can develop high extensions and outstanding control.

Many of you can kick much higher than waist-level — how many of you can kick to your highest point, stop the leg there and hold it for a slow count of 3?

Many of you can kick to your highest point from a "swing" or from 5th Position — how many of you can lift the straight leg slowly to its highest point from a *tendu battement* position (front, side, or back)? You will undoubtedly find that the lift to the back is easier than the lift to the front or side; the elevation of the leg to *Seconde en l'air* is the most difficult because it requires not only great lifting power but a perfect turnout as well. The lift to the back is assisted by the strength of the back-muscles, and if you have practised the many back-and-waist-exercises that I gave you in August and September, 1949, you will do the Arabesque positions without too much strain.

This first exercise of January, 1950, therefore, is designed to develop lifting-power of the thighs for extensions to the front and side.

EXERCISE 67

Dashes, Arcs, and Circles: Front

Stand at the bar, facing right, holding bar with left hand; feet in 5th Position, right foot front. Lift your right leg straight front, with straight knee and pointed toe, as high as you can; hold it at that point. (It probably won't be very high the first time, but don't give up, it will improve). Now, in short "jerky" movements, make a small Dash to the right — Dash to the left — Dash to the right — Dash to the left; Next, make an Arc going over the hill to the right — Arc over to the left — Arc over to the right — Arc over to the left: Next, make a small outside Circle to the right — outside Circle — outside Circle — outside Circle: Then make an inside Circle — inside Circle — inside Circle — inside Circle. These small circles should be controlled entirely from the hip-joint, and they should be sharply separated, not a continuous circular movement. Now, lower the right leg to 5th Position and start a high outside Circular Kick, crossing the right leg in front of the body to the left, up, out to the right, and down to 5th. Repeat the outside CIRCLE 4 times; then starting from 5th Position, make an inside Circular Kick, opening the leg out to the right and kicking it up, over to the left, and down to 5th. Repeat the inside Circle 4 times. REPEAT THE ENTIRE EXERCISE WITH THE LEFT LEG.

EXERCISE 68

Dashes, Arcs, and Circles: Side

This is a complete repetition of the above exercise with the leg raised to the side (Seconde en l'air). The exercise proceeds exactly the same as above, but the circular kicks will be entirely to the side of the body and care must be taken to keep the hips turned out even if the extension is not very high. Be sure to practise equally with left and right legs.

EXERCISE 69

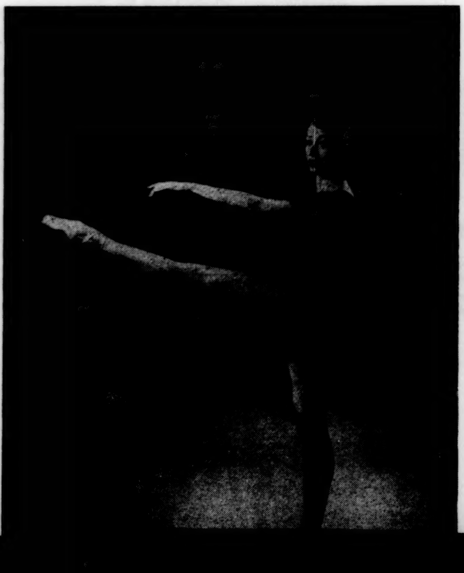
Swing Kick: Control

Stand at the bar, facing right, holding with left hand; feet in 1st Position. Point the right foot back on the floor (Tendu Battement). From this Position, swing the leg forward (not high), back (not high), then Front (as high as possible) and try to hold it for 2 counts. Then, swing the leg back (not high), front (not high), and Back (as high as possible), holding it for 2 counts. Count this exercise in March Tempo: 1 — 2 — 3 and 4 (hold), 1 — 2 — 3 and 4 (hold). As you improve the control, count 3 and 4 much slower than you count 1 — 2 — but be sure to hold that position as high as you possibly can. REPEAT 16 TIMES each leg.

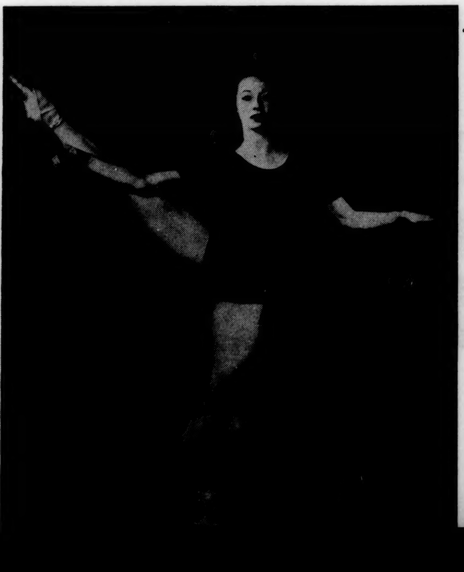
photographed exclusively for Dance Magazine by **WALTER E. OWEN**

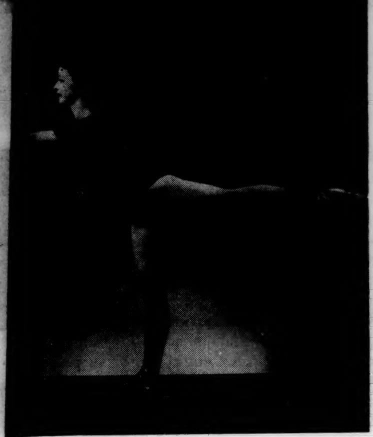
posed by PATRICIA BOWMAN

EXERCISE 67
Front extension at start of exercise.

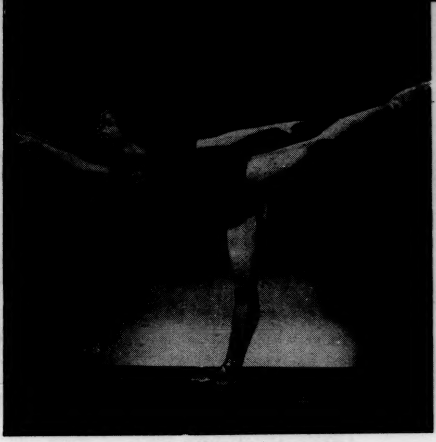


EXERCISE 68
Side extension at start of exercise (same for Ex. 70)

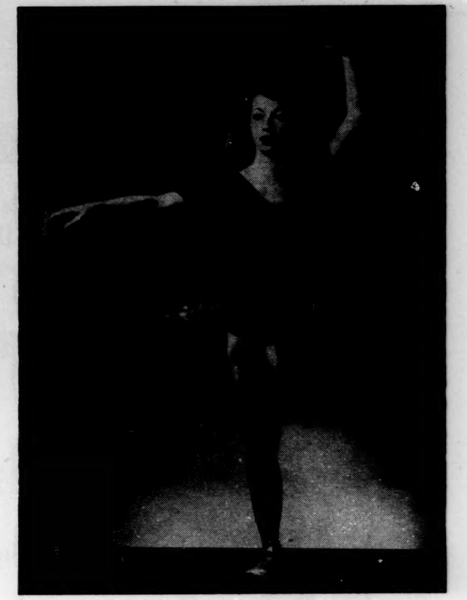




EXERCISE 69
Swing kick to the back.

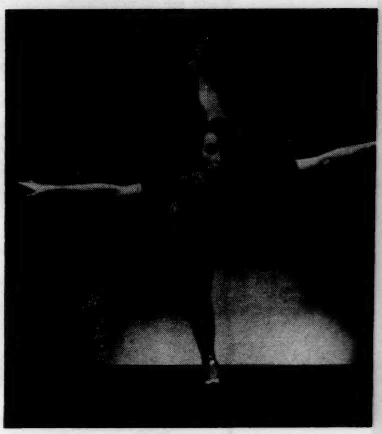


EXERCISE 73
Adagio movement, 1st arabesque Penche (leaning forward).

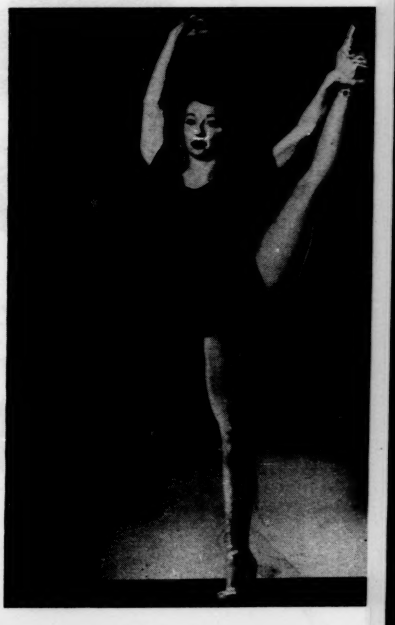


EXERCISE 73
Classic attitude in adagio movement.

EXERCISE 74-76
Croisse Arabesque (from the front)



EXERCISE 77-79
Extension in side developpe (2nd a la air).



EXERCISE 70

Seconde Position en l'air Control

Stand at bar, facing right, holding bar with left hand; feet in 5th Position, right foot front, Right leg to *PASSÉ* position, place right hand under instep of right foot, gripping it firmly; pull leg to front straightening right knee and bending knee of supporting left leg (demi-plié). Pull right leg as high as possible towards right shoulder, and pull it to the side, at the same time straightening left leg. Hold this side extension for 2 counts; remove hand for instep, open right arm to the side slightly below shoulder-level, and hold leg in Seconde *en l'air* for another 2 counts; then close slowly to 5th Position. REPEAT AT LEAST 4 TIMES; PREFERABLY 8 TIMES: REPEAT ENTIRE EXERCISE WITH LEFT LEG.

EXERCISE 71

Second Position Sur La Pointe

With your "pointes" (or toe-slippers) after you have well exercised your feet with simple "Échappés" and "Rélevés", etc., you may practise the above exercise. Before removing hand from instep, Releve on the supporting leg; remove hand, taking right arm overhead, then Balance raising left arm overhead, and close to 5th Position, both feet coming down simultaneously. This is an exceptionally difficult exercise, but one that is essential to dancers of Ballerina-caliber. REPEAT AS OFTEN AS YOU FEEL NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE BALANCE. REPEAT EQUALLY WITH RIGHT AND LEFT LEGS TO ASSURE COORDINATED CONTROL.

EXERCISE 72

Adagio I: At Bar

Part 1

Stand at bar, facing right, holding bar with left hand; feet in 5th Position, right foot front. Right leg to Passe position; *Développé* (gradually straighten leg) to front, knee straight and toe pointed; raise right arm overhead; *Rélevé* on left demi-pointe; balance (focus eyes on object directly ahead); raise left arm overhead; hold the balance as long as you possibly can. At first this will be but a few seconds, but with practise you should be able to hold the extension on the demi-pointe at least a full minute. When you can balance no longer, close to 5th Position, holding bar with left hand, and do one *Grand Battement* with the right leg to the front, finishing in 5th Position.

Part 2

Passe right leg; Développé to side (Seconde en l'air); raise right arm overhead; *Rélevé* on left demi-pointe; raise left arm overhead; balance as long as possible; close to 5th Position; *Grand Battement* right leg to side; finish 5th Position.

Part 3

Passe right leg; *Développé* to back (Arabesque); raise right arm overhead; *Rélevé* on left demi-pointe; raise left arm overhead; balance as long as possible; close to 5th Position; *Grand Battement* right leg to back; finish in 5th Position.

Part 4

Repeat part 2: *Développé* to side; balance. REPEAT ENTIRE EXERCISE WITH LEFT LEG.

NOTES

Remember to use your diaphragm when doing this exercise, review the November installment, Chapter VIII: "Exercises for the Diaphragm and Breathing in Ballet". Do not raise your shoulders when you raise your arms nor while you are holding balance. Do not let your hips sag, hold them level-and-firm; do not squat on the supporting leg. When taking the side position, keep the entire leg turned out from the hip, so that the heel of the foot shows to the front, and the pelvic-section is not raised out-of-line. In part 3, the Arabesque balance, be careful to keep the extended leg well back of the body, in line with the shoulder, to be exact. Do not let the leg swing outside the line to the side; and do not raise the hip to the side or twist it out-of-line — as in all Arabesques, the hips should be symmetrically above the shoulders.

You will find this exercise excellent for the Balance as well as for CONTROL EXTENSIONS.

(Continued on page 32)

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The following exercise is an ADAGIO to be practised in the center-floor. If it is too long and tiring at first, divide it into sections, closing to 5th Position between each section, and resuming the movement from there. ADAGIO is a most important accomplishment for the advanced student of Ballet for without Control the dancer cannot show the beautiful line of movement. The term ADAGIO means *slowly* in musical notation; therefore, such exercise must be practised *VERY SLOWLY* to develop Balance, Control, Coordination, and Aplomb.

EXERCISE 73

Adagio II: Center Floor

Stand in 5th Position, right foot front, both arms overhead in 5th Pos. Full PLIE slowly in 8 counts (4 counts down: 4 counts rise) RELEVE 5th Position, holding feet locked together; bend waist to right side, let arms flow gracefully overhead to right side (2 counts to side; 2 counts to erect) then, bend waist to left side (2 counts to side: 2 counts to erect); place heels down in 5th Position smoothly, opening arms out to sides softly.

Part 1

PASSE right leg; DEVELOPPE to front; move leg slowly to SECONDE en l'air; move the leg back to ARABESQUE. (This complete movement is a *Grand Rond de Jambe en dehors* and must be done with the extended leg as high, as straight, and as turned-out as possible). Keep leg up and continue:

Part 2

PASSE again right leg; DEVELOPPE to front; move leg slowly to SECONDE en l'air; move the leg back to ARABESQUE; PASSE:

Part 3

Open the leg to SECONDE en l'air; raise both arms over head; PIVOT on the left foot to the right slowly, holding the extension with control; make a full turn on the left leg returning to the straight-front-view;

Part 4

Move the leg back to ARABESQUE, lowering the left arm to the side; bend the right knee so that you are in a CLASSIC ATTITUDE position; PIVOT on the left foot to the right, making a full turn in the ATTITUDE: return to straight-front-view;

Part 5

Straighten leg to ARABESQUE, lowering right arm to side, moving left arm forward, so that you are in 1st ARABESQUE facing the front of the studio; PIVOT on the left leg to the left, making 1¼ turn (a full-turn-and-a-quarter), so that you face the left wall:

Part 6

Hold the arch in your back, the leg high, the knees rigidly straight: Incline your body forward, the right leg should lift higher automatically if you maintain the position in your back. Let the left arm reach down towards the floor, without breaking the ARABESQUE line; raise body slowly and evenly; RELEVE on left demi-pointe; balance; close to 5th Position, right foot in back of left; both arms out to sides slightly below shoulder-level.

START LEFT 5th POSITION PLIE IMMEDIATELY AND REPEAT ENTIRE EXERCISE WITH LEFT LEG.

NOTE

The last movement, where the body is inclined forward during the ARABESQUE balance is called ARABESQUE PENCHE (*pencher* means *to lean*: *penche* means *leaning*).

EXERCISE 74

Cross Arabesque

I presume that all of you, teachers and students, are familiar with the five CLASSIC ARABESQUES. To add to your positions, we give you one of the loveliest of all ARABESQUES, the CROSS. Properly executed, the CROSS ARABESQUE is a perfect blend of symmetry, balance, and grace. As an exercise, it is invaluable for strengthening the arch-of-the-back; for developing accurate balance; and for teaching the correct line of the leg in all Arabesques.

Too often we see Arabesques out-of-line, the leg back at a tangent that is somewhere between side and back; in all Arabesques the leg should be raised directly back of the shoulder, without raising the hip to the side or twisting the torso in any way; in no case should the leg be outside the line of the torso, nor should the hips be swung out of line with the shoulders.

Stand center-floor, (preferably facing a full-length mirror) feet in 5th Position, left foot front; arms out to sides at shoulder-level, quite straight, back and head erect. Raise right leg straight back to ARABESQUE as high as possible without inclining body forward. When you feel the highest ARABESQUE has been attained, tighten your back to hold that position, and gradually lean entire torso forward. Your supporting leg should be like the fulcrum of a see-saw, and torso-and-raised-leg making the teeter-board. The perfect CROSS ARABESQUE is reached when the body is lowered to the point that, from the front-view, the torso is no longer visible; the left leg appears to be straight down and the right leg straight up, the arms a straight line across, with the head in the middle. This line is beautiful when accomplished, and the entire exercise is excellent for the back, legs, arms, head, and balance of the whole.

Practise the CROSS ARABESQUE, then raise your body slowly, lowering the leg evenly to the floor, closing to 5th Position. REPEAT SEVERAL TIMES WITH EACH LEG. PRACTISE SLOWLY, WATCH THE LINE IN A MIRROR, REMEMBER CONTROL.

EXERCISE 75

Cross Arabesques Alternating

Take CROSS ARABESQUE position slowly as in #74; (standing on left leg, right leg raised in back). Balance as long as possible. Quickly, swing the right leg from back to a front high-kick (aim to right shoulder), step on right foot forward, shift balance immediately; raise left leg to CROSS ARABESQUES balance, kick left leg front high-kick; step on left foot forward; repeat alternately CROSS ARABESQUES and kicks 8 times. It is advisable to start at back of studio as you travel forward with each successive kick-and-step.

EXERCISE 76

Cross Arabesque Renverse

Take CROSS ARABESQUE position as described in #74, standing on left leg, right leg raised back: Balance as long as possible: With an imperceptible bend of the left knee, push to a strong RELEVE on left demi-pointe, so as to pivot a ½-turn to the right; as you do this, your body stays low, and it turns right over to a backbend, with both arms swinging back over your head; the right leg stays up, bending at the knee — (At this point, you are in a backbend on the left demi-pointe, your right leg is raised in front of you, bent sharply at the knee, both arms are back over your head). You do not stop in this position; I am merely describing it in detail so that you will do the entire movement correctly. The Pivot is completed immediately thus: Turn your body right over, straighten the right leg, open the arms out to sides, you are again in the original Cross Arabesque position.

This is an exceedingly difficult turn, an exacting balance, and a spectacular feat of control; we do not expect perfection from students; but begin by practising it in sections, learning first the Cross Arabesque; adding gradually the ½-pivot; then studying the second ½-pivot; practising the half-way position as carefully as the Arabesque; and finally, putting the whole together to complete the Cross Arabesque Renverse. *This will* take as much practise as *you need.*

EXERCISE 77

Releves A La Seconde Extremé

Stand center-floor, 5th Position, right foot front. Passe right leg; left arm extended to side, right hand takes hold of right instep, opening leg straight to Seconde *en l'air* as high as possible. Holding this position, Releve on left demi-pointe; *Demi-plié*, Releve; *Demi-plié*, count as follows: Releve 1—2—/*Demi-plié* 3—/Releve 1—2—/*Demi-plié* 3—"Waltz Tempo". At first, practise 8 Releves; then increase the number to 16; then to 32, depending on the facility. Do not jump on them, Releve with Control. REPEAT EQUALLY WITH LEFT LEG RAISED, LEFT HAND UNDER INSTEP.

EXERCISE 78

Rélevés A La Seconde Extremé En Tournant

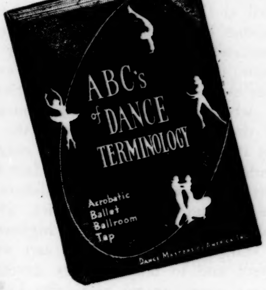
Take the position as described in #77 Releve on left demi-pointe, making a Pivot to the right, the tension of the arm and leg extended should pull you in the turn; also, the action of the head in spotting gives momentum. At first, the student will do only ½ or ¼-turn on each Releve; but practise will soon bring a full turn on each rise to the demi-pointe. After speed and facility develop, the student may take the exercise by starting with a Pirouette en Dehors, opening the leg to the side, and grasping the instep quickly with the hand. It is spectacular to finish the exercise after 32 Releves en Tournant by dropping to a Front Split. REPEAT ENTIRE EXERCISE WITH LEFT LEG, TURNING TO THE LEFT.

EXERCISE 79

Grande Pirouette A La Seconde Extremé

Take the position described in #77. As in a regular Grande Pirouette, you turn by hopping close to the floor on the supporting leg, keeping the toe almost entirely on the floor and letting heel pivot in small hops. Standing on the left leg, the right leg extended to Seconde Extreme, pivot to the right (en dehors), making a full turn on each hop. This should be done quickly and lightly, staying in one spot on the floor, finishing in a Front Split. It may be started with a Pirouette en Dehors as preparation,, or from a Pas de Bourree en Tournant.

See FEBRUARY, 1950 issue for next chapter in this series.



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2 points of view

— WILLIAM CHAPPELL

(*Continued from page* 18)

regarded as a perfect example.

"Critic," the dictionary says, "One who pronounces judgment on any thing or person (esp. a censurer or caviller)."

"Criticism," the dictionary continues, "The action of criticizing, or passing (esp. unfavourable) judgment upon the qualities of anything."

To fulfill these functions, most of our ballet critics in company with the estimable Mrs. Beesley, bend all their best endeavours.

There are, however, further definitions.

"Critic. One skilled in literary or artistic criticism."

"Criticism. The art of estimating the qualities and character of literary or artistic work."

Though I may hesitate to say that dramatic, literary, musical and art critics fail to measure up to these requirements, I am prepared to state catgorically that ballet critics, taken as a group, fall lamentably short. To be "skilled" implies, at the very least, a working knowledge of the art under criticism, and, at the very most, a complete and practical understanding, joined to a life-long study and a practising intimacy.

Disraeli once said: "You know who the critics are? The men who have failed in literature and art." This somewhat sweeping statement at least suggests people who had attempted to penetrate the mysteries of the subject on which they were expressing their opinions. If I could feel that the popular lady novelists, the politically minded young women, the dramatic producers, and the rest of the enthusiastic writers and reporters who go to make up the new school of ballet criticism, had ever attempted to dance or tackled choreography, even to the extent of failing at either of those exacting occupations, I would hold my peace. The fact of failing would be unimportant compared with the fact that they had tried, personally and physically, to master some of the intricacies of the art of ballet, an art of so special a nature, that only living and working in and with it can give the knowledge necessary to write of it with understanding.

A theoretical and bookish education in ballet is not enough. Nor, alas! is a passionate enthusiasm. Were these attributes sufficient, every vociferous character in the gallery audience could be accepted as fully qualified to enter the critical field.

The audiences and the critics are, I am sure, devoted to the ballet, yet to listen to the remarks overheard in the interval, or to read many of the notices of a ballet performance, one might often imagine that more pain than pleasure was being experienced; or is it merely a facet of the many sided British talent for gloomily enjoying intense mental or physical discomfort?

Literary critics are writers; they understand and practise, brilliantly, capably or boringly, the art of the written word, and can therefore be fairly said, in greater or lesser degree, to be in a position to pass judgment on other writers.

The drama consists of the written and spoken word. Many dramatic critics have been playwrights themselves and there is, in addition, something of the actor hidden in practically every human being.

A musical critic is able to read a score, and has usually had a complete musical education. All this is very right and proper. One may cavil at their various opinions; one cannot cavil at their right to express them. But, can anyone of our ballet critics perform the simplest entrechat, hold a correctly placed arabesque, or perform with 'brio an *enchainement*, or any of the other technicalities of the dance whose terms they so courageously scatter through their writings on the ballet? I doubt it; and doubting it, I can only regard with sadness and humiliation the fact that the majority of the editors and publishers appear to consider the art of the ballet, which, in its best forms is an art of the highest mobility, a subject open to almost any writer of sensitivity and to many wholly devoid of it. A subject requiring no particular knowledge, no authentic background, only a fondness and an enthusiasm.

It is not enough to be fond of the ballet. I would go so far as to say I am no longer fond of the ballet. It is easier to be fond of it as a spectator than as a citizen of its circumscribed and highly individual world.

The worlds of art, music, and letters are vast and open to many and varied talents. The world of ballet is tiny — tiny and mysterious, and only its inhabitants can know it thoroughly.

I will listen with more interest to the opinions of the lowest member of the corps de ballet, than I will to the nicely chosen and erudite words of many established ballet critics, for I know that the young dancer has been, time and again, through the boredom and physical misery of classes and rehearsals; has known the exhilarating pleasures of a successful performance; and has been part of the gestation and creation of the work of living choreographers.

Knowing all this gives one a faint right to be as assertive and didactic as many writers on the ballet, but, knowing intimately and personally the life and sensations of being a dancer, then one must try to avoid being didactic and assertive, merely describing, and sometimes attempting to analyse, the different aspects of dancing and dancers as carefully as lies in one's power. Under these circumstances, perhaps some form of truth can be arrived at.

In his exquisite book *Early One Morning* Walter de la Mare, speaking of books on childhood, says: "The only human being competent to reveal what any child is, is that child himself, but even he can only reveal what he is in part, and he cannot share his being."

I wish I possessed the grace, the wit and knowledge, to have thought of saying that about dancers, and books on dancers, for it is perfectly applicable.

*

In conclusion, let me quote my favourite description of — can it be a ballet? — critic, from a dialogue in *The Club* by James Puckle (1711).

The Father speaks. "By a CRITIC, was originally understood a good judge; but now with us, it signifies no more than an unmerciful faultfinder; two stops above a fool, and a great many below a wise man . . . The laws of civility oblige us to commend what, in reason, we cannot blame. Men should allow others excellencies, to preserve a modest opinion of their own . . . It is the distemper of would-be-thought wits, with an envious curiosity to examine, censure, and vilify others works, as if they imagined it gave them an air of distinction and authority to regard them with an air of contempt . . ."

I could wish, also, I had thought of that for myself.

*

---

2 points of view

— A. V. COTON

(*Continued from page* 19)

ment. He is able to legitimately shift his point of view because his perspective of the art is a much wider one than that of anyone making that kind of art; he understands not only the framework of techniques but also the processes of organization, distribution, propaganda. He is no creative critic unless he has this broad outlook on the forms of art that interest him; he recognizes that the creative artist makes the work of art, while he himself guides its distribution, predigests it for public consumption, shapes its propaganda, and later records the event for posterity, ***incidentally adding* something to the lore from which the artist of the future can learn.**

In one class we have the direct creative artist — Chaucer, Villon, Milton, Heine, Cezanne, Botticelli and so on — who can give a special kind of commentary on the world to the ordinary mortals who see with dimmer eyes, hear with duller ears than he does, what happens in this magic, tragic world. Their poems, fables, essays, pictures speak directly to anyone who looks at them; the other kind of artist needs interpreters to bring his works to full life — singers, actors, dancers, instrumentalists. The performers act as a kind of filter through which the work of art passes from artist to consumer; if honest, they struggle with the problem of giving their whole personality to the work of art but without imposing the personality on the artist's intentions. It is when they are prohibited from so imposing themselves that they scream most piercingly about the critic whose task is, when necessary, to dangle before them the carrot of approbation, or prod them with burning words.

There have been artists who were first-rate critics, either of the art they served, or of other arts and the life around them, and the value of their creative criticism is such that they influence the making of art for long periods after their utterances; consider the importance of such figures as Voltaire, Berlioz, Hazlitt, Goethe, Coleridge, Cervantes, Ibsen and — in the world of Dance — Noverre and Fokine. And there is a type of "interpretive critic", a classification lower than the creative critic, with an ability to make a simple and immediate verdict based on his knowledge of only the art-form that interests him: he is

(*Continued on page* 36)

1950—1960

It is befitting the start of a new decade to take stock of the past and look to the future, one which holds out such promise as a "Golden Decade" for dance. One fact stands out above all others. Dance has become an integral part of the American Way of Life. Dance artists have been publicly acclaimed for their contributions in this accomplishment. They have helped to bring about a new theatre concept — the musical play . . . they have modernized and popularized ballet and have brought dance art closer to the general public. They have brought dance to the American campus and will contribute to bringing dance and dance exercises into the American home through the wonders of television.

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2 points of view — by A. V. COTON

(*Continued from page* 34)

concerned with technical mastery and craftsmanship in execution and knows little — or nothing — about the aesthetic or philosophical value of the work of art.

★

The artist — of whatever kind — may fairly ask; "What sort of training has the critic undergone? What gives him the authority to criticise?" This brings in questions of Knowledge, Taste, Judgement: at the start of his career no critic knows — exactly as no artist knows — what sort of work he will produce. Knowledge is what he acquires from his study of the arts, their histories and philosophies — Taste is the capacity for picking out the most true and most interesting manifestations of Art and Life — Judgement is the creative process, the balancing of Knowledge with Taste. Good Taste has been defined as any manifestation of Art which interests an informed and critical mind: add to this George Jean Nathan's aphorism: "Criticism is the art of appraising others at one's own value", and it is apparent that the creative critic produces writings worthy of attention in proportion as he shows himself a man of calculated values, applied to a wide perspective of Art.

He *can* judge music though he be no composer, painting although he never handled a palette, a ballet though he never danced; he *can* do these things because — for example — he has studied *why* different kinds of music were made at different periods as well as listened to a lot of music of many kinds. He will have read the lives of earlier musicians and critics and know how musical training was organized at earlier periods, by what means performances were planned, how much money reached the players' pockets to help keep them alive. His technical knowledge will be bookish rather than tangible; he can probably play the piano badly, read a score intelligently, and carry in memory a clear picture of two or three hundred years' of musical history. It is his business to know about all sorts of matters connected with the making and distributing of music which frequently never occur to the artist — and from this background of detailed knowledge he draws both the facts and the hypotheses on which his criticism is founded.

All the above should be clear from a lengthy acquaintance with the critics' work, and disposes of the argument frequently heard on the lips of the anti-critical artist — that the critic would, without him, be jobless; that the critic is, in fact, a parasite on the arts. The more complex the form of society, the more we are all dependent on one another, the more necessary is it for the artist to have the critic in the near background to act as guide and teacher for the public which consumes the art. Through the very richness and complexity of modern society, all of us in the world of art — creators, distributors, critics, consumers — are to an extent parasitic upon one another. In the vernacular, we all live by taking in one another's washing! — and are sometimes resentful of the fact.

The minor sort of critics are, of course, the people responsible for another great misunderstanding about the critic's place in the world of Art. Amongst neophytes of the arts there is a widespread belief that the critic has the ear of all artists, impresarios, editors and fellow-critics; that when not writing his incalculable verdicts in, alternately, honey and vitriol, he is watching everything from front-row seats and dining at the tables of the wealthier artists and managers. The true picture is a complete reversal of this supposedly Lucullan scale of eating and entertainment. In rare instances the critic enjoys the well-earned friendship of a few artists in the field which most interests him — a friendship which allows him to know those artists' opinions of their own work and that of their fellows, but which prevents him using that knowledge when passing his own judgements; and which, further, permits him (in print) to scientifically disembowel said artists when they create rubbish.

The critic is the better for not knowing in private life any of those whose work he judges (all his knowledge of their ideas and techniques he can get from studying their works), for only extraordinarily honest people can make, and take, hard criticism. Most of all, it is generally forgotten that the critic is the toughest judge of his verdicts before he commits them to print. Show me a critic whose social life is largely shared with those actors, singers, novelists, dancers, painters whose products he criticises and I will put my finger on, at best, an equivocator, and, at worst, a phoney . . . unless his integrity is phenomenal and his moral character supernormal.

Artists of all kinds have fans who, apart from worshipping from afar, also descend upon them at intervals like the Greeks, "bearing rich gifts": all that the critic gets is a vituperative letter because he has at last, regretfully, told the whole truth about So-and-So's lates novel, play, sonata or ballet. And it is proper that things should be this way, for if the artist is remote from others because he *feels* differently about Art, then the critic must remain separate because he *thinks* differently about the arts. As well as thinking he feels too, but he knows that feeling alone is an insufficient formula for dealing with life — feeling must be balanced against thought if chaos is not to swamp all human endeavour.

★

The observations set forth above can now be referred to the creation and criticism of Dance. Ballet is so highly stylised an art that, to create an artistic experience in the heart and mind of the beholder, it must be made, interpreted and presented to rigorously high standards of taste. The dancer undergoes a hard and protracted training, as does the choreographer, composer and designer; next to themselves no one knows this better than the critic and he can note in a performance those errors and shortcomings which are due to imperfect training, tiredness or slipshod staging, and condone them. But apart from a choreographer who works with a performing company, nobody except the critic has so wide a viewpoint on *everything* connected with any given performance; his training leads him to watch the dancing while listening to the music, noting the quality of decor and lighting and grasping the pattern of both the drama and the choreographic structure. His verdict must be, first, on the whole presentation and then on each of its parts in descending order of importance — and this is the obvious fact which is unperceived by those dancers who conceive of criticism as either a stream of adulatory adjectives about their particular contributions — or a blank silence about their mere competence.

Criticism occupies the odd position of being in itself a minor art yet existing only as an ancillary to other arts, and from this it follows that great criticism can only be written about great art; a phase of artistic decay usually coincides with a dearth of sound critics. The study of 19th century Ballet which analyses not only Who danced What, but How and Why ballets were being made in certain places, would show a decline in aesthetic values parallel with a decline of creative criticism. After the events they recorded the masters of balletography in that period show themselves, in general, as so many over-age schoolboys declaring their calf love for the prettier dancers of the epoch. We had to wait for Fokine to come upon the scene of decline before we get an accurate estimate of what went wrong — and how to put it right.

The art of Dance in the Theatre flourishes in our century solely because acute, creative criticism was brought to bear on the manner of its decline, and this led to an adumbration of fresh principles which gave it a fresh lease of life. Yet is is unlikely that Fokine could have awakened this particular Sleeping Princess without the guidance and help of *his* greatest critic, Diaghilev. The legitimate place for the critic in the Theatre is not only the auditorium — he can belong inside one of the processes of the Theatre, and his views on basic principles will be usually found to parallel those of the informal critics who give their judgments from an outside point of view, i.e. those who attend performances to weigh them for the public of the day, and for posterity. This is the kind of critic who need never have attended a class in his life, though he will have watched hundreds of classes, seen thousands of performances, heard the music again and again, talked about their work with the greatest of choreographers and the greenest of corps-de-ballet girls . . . and at the end of forty or fifty years of critical activity, it is a safe bet that he has as keen a thrill at the moment the curtain rises as the dancer on the far side of the curtain about to embark on his first solo — he *has* to have, because he knows no other kind of reward worth having for what he has given to the art throughout his life!

the Masque in Ballet

(*Continued from page 23*)

recorded in woodcuts. Artists painted this dance on cloister walls, on a wooden bridge, on a cemetery wall in Pisa, and on the wall of St. Paul's cathedral in London. The Morality Plays and the Miracle Plays both used a display of dance, while now the church dance-rituals began to die out. The Masque of the Church was over, when Luther hammered on the doors of Wittenberg, but its energies recovered in many a ballet, first at court with Richelieu and Mazarin — and finally at the newly appearing bourgeois town theatres, where dance was now enclosed behind doors, which opened only at a price.

Aristocratic Masque was changing into the commercial theatre — into the development of theatre ballet, from the court ballet in France which was itself the high point of Social Masque. The newer rulers themselves no longer danced in public; they paid professionals to dance for them. Thus parted the ways of *danse du salon* and *danse du theatre*, while folk dance continued, as it always has, robust and vital. The seasons of the farmer's year still demanded their natural celebration, through field and forest — and folk dance refreshed the town dance, much as nature's products fed the townspeople. Corn will not grow in city streets, nor will vital dance ever be thus inspired.

The popular, traditional country dances, known for centuries in many local styles, and in slowly changing fashion, were seized upon by court chamberlains. They were polished and refined, and folk dance now became the *danse du cour*, for manners and stately grace. Peter the Great saw all these facts clearly enough; that was why he so abruptly imported Western European dances to his court. He had seen its prestige value in the English court.

Though presently the ballroom dance and the court ballet parted ways, with folk dance trotting alongside, at the period of the Renaissance Masque they all went together. In Elizabethan England, the Italian Masque was an importation or family dance festival. In its older form as a folk festival it had lived for centuries as "Twelve Nights" or "Hoch Messe", celebrated always at the Winter solstice. In this tradition are the animal and bird figures, just as from the parallel mediaeval tradition in Lombardy and Tuscany came the leading town figures which later became Harlequin and Scarpin and Zany — one character each from a town. They became amalgamated in the *Commedia della Arte*, only after Dante had allegorized the theological legends of Thomas of Aquinas in his Divine Comedy — a written Masque, to contrast with the unwritten legend of the popular *commedia* of the town — the people's own *mascherata*.

In Elizabethan England we can study court masque at its high period. Italian influence brought a finished ducal product; for a time the older folk masque of Twelfth Night was secondary, although it long appeared in London at the Temple on famous occasions like that at Kenilworth in 1575 when Queen Elizabeth was entertained by the Earl of Leicester, or when John Milton produced his *Comus* in 1634 at Ludlow.

English poets like John Milton and Ben Johnson wrote poetry for the newer Protestant Masque, while great English composers like Henry Purcell furnished the music. We may be sure that the dancers' contributions revealed an equal level of skill; contemporary references to dance are too numerous to mention.

The European religious revolution changed the popular direction of all forms of the Social Masque and even the court dance. After Greek tales (revived) had had their sway, the theological ballet appeared, again to be ousted by the romantic ballet inspired by the alchemists, the Rosicrucians and French *literati*. We may observe all these social changes in the allied arts of painting and architecture, although architecture is always slower to reflect social change than the other arts.

In England the court ballet has altered completely into the court ball, while the court masque now appears only at rare intervals in coronation ceremonial, fortified by occasional street processions, inspired by court chamberlains (or even by politicians). The court walls enclose *their* solemn dance as definitely as the theatre walls enclose the *professional ballet*.

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reviewers' stand

(Continued from page 10)

Balanchine's works are based on a firm well ordered foundation of "danse d'ecole".

This does not mean that Miss Temkin was obligated to use classic movement, too. But she should have decided just what kind of movement she was going to use and then stuck to it so that the choreographic and dramatic content of CHARA could speak unhampered.

Jean Houloose's PRAIRIE SUITE is full of movement, some of it quite attractive, but all without core. The title would indicate that it has something to do with a prairie, either dramatically or in terms of space awareness. But the movement was hurried and urban. And although the dance was composed for three men and three women, it might as well have contained six of one kind, for all the rapport that was established between the couples. Then, too, the very modern score by Ray Green seemed entirely unrelated to the stage action.

The program also included **Betty Lind's** touching SORROW IS AN ARRIVAL, **Frank Westbrook's** madly masterful THEATRE PIECE — VERTIGO 1949, the Sarah Lawrence Group's SYNOPSIS ACT 1 SCENE 1, and **Jean Houloose's** HERITAGE.

★

Anyone who thinks that modern dance is drowning in its own brainwaves should have been present at the **Dance Audition Winners** Concert on November 21 at the 92nd Street "Y". It was a happy, hopeful occasion.

The six young people making their professional debuts as dancer-choreographers performed with an un-self-conscious frankness that was a far cry from the pseudo-intellectual and derivative antics one often finds on such occasions.

Ronne Aul, who opened the program, has within him the seeds of a great performer. He has a Limon-like dignity and elegance combined with that wonderfully catlike interflow of muscular tension and relaxation that distinguishes the "born" dancer from the "made" dancer.

It is difficult to speak of Mr. Aul's compositions in terms of formal design, for their special value seems to lie in their performance. But there was sensitivity in his adolescent portrait, AND SO, THE BEGINNING. And there was awareness in his kinetic outburst called FUGUE-MOOD-WORKOUT.

In some respects an artist of Ronne Aul's type has more problems than the average dancer. For the superficial aspects of his talent are bound to attract an enthusiastic audience before he has time to develop methodically and diligently.

Rena Gluck is one of those rare youngsters from whom emotion flows pure, unhampered, and tremendously moving. Yet, despite her youth, it is not the immoderate, diffuse emotion of adolescence.

Her lament for a departed soldier (JOHNNY HAS GONE FOR A SOLDIER) and her socially aware BURST OF FISTS were eloquent because her strong feeling was moulded into big, free, rounded movement that never became formless or self-conscious. The long sweeping phrases were sustained and varied with sensitivity and flexibility.

Technically Miss Gluck has range, but her consistently arched back should be corrected.

Nachum and **Dina** have an innocence that is almost frightening. It's so rare and so radiant.

Yet they are not in the least cloying. They perform their Jewish tradition-inspired duets as though they were two youngsters out playing in a field. They are by turns tender and mischievous with each other. They are constantly in touch with the spiritual and ancestral source of their subject matter. And their little dances have just enough dramatic quality to keep them interesting.

Although they rely more heavily on pantomime than on virtuoso movement, both need further study before they can call themselves technically finished dancers.

Nina Caiserman seems to be a stronger choreographer than she is dancer. Her BALLAD and certainly her SURVIVAL AT AUSCHWITZ had an awarenss of how movement looks to the spectator.

In the SURVIVAL AT AUSCHWITZ she achieves the perilous transition from literal movement in to semi-abstraction that is required of this type of subject matter. The dance was stirring, but its impact would have been greater had she stopped sooner — perhaps at the point where the vocal accompanist (Betty Ancona) screamed.

As a dancer Miss Caiserman has yet to achieve a personal style. But perhaps this will come when she learns that relaxation can be as communicative as tension and that feet and hands must not be ignored as vehicles of expression.

Lucas Hoving was the only one of the dancers who showed a tendancy to intellectualize. And it somewhat constrained his very beautiful and highly trained dancing instrument.

Both his THREE CHARACTERS and DAWN IN NEW YORK were full of highly interesting but somewhat contrived movement. The total effect was one of high competence, rather than deep, intuitive feeling.

It will probably take Mr. Hoving a time to find a real voice of his own, for he has been under the influence of two mighty schools — Jooss and Limon-Humphrey. Any young dancer would be overly self-critical after that.

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the BAMBUCO

(Continued from page 21)

years ago. Then it yielded in popularity to other South American dances such as the *Rumba* and *Samba*, and to the North American Jitterbug. Now once again the *Bambuco* finds itself popular in Colombia, as the present generation listens with new and appreciative ears to the intriguing rhythms of its native music.

We first heard *Bambuco* music about four years ago when Maestro Emil Coleman played it at the Wedgewood Room of the Waldorf-Astoria. We remember then that as the exciting music filled the room everyone was delighted and curious, for *Bambuco* music is something you cannot ignore — anyway, not the way Emil Coleman plays it. A few of the more enterprising couples stayed on the floor and danced their interpretation of the music. We did too — and perhaps our version was not all it could have been, for later in the evening we found ourselves across the hall with the Maestro while he gave us our first lesson in the *Bambuco*, both dance and musical rhythm — and an excellent lesson it was.

Mr. Coleman's introduction to the *Bambuco* came in Washington, D. C., during the war. He was playing at the Hotel Statler, and his music drew the diplomats from many of the South American Embassies. One evening he played as usual a varied dance program of Latin-American music — *Tangos* for the Argentineans, *Rumbas* for the Cubans, *Sambas* for the Brazilians, *Paso Dobles* for the Mexicans — something for everyone, he thought. But no. A couple stopped at his piano and the young lady said. "Mr. Coleman, you play something for everybody else, but why don't you play something for us Colombians?" Since the Maestro is an extremely amiable man he said, "Well, of course, what do you have that I can play?" The young lady replied, "Why, we have the Bambuco!" Mr. Coleman tells us that at that stage, so far as he knew, the *Bambuco* could have been another type of connoisseur's coffee, such as *Medellin, Bucaramanga*, or *Manizales*. But he was speedily enlightened, for the next day the young lady sent him the sheet music for the selection *Guabina Chiquinquireña*.

Mr. Coleman worked out an arrangement, and the next time the Senorita from Colombia appeared he was ready for her. He recalls, "I crossed my fingers, figuratively speaking, and started to play." Reaction came fast. The girl and her partner jumped up quickly, danced the *Bambuco* with much gusto, and immediately after the number vanished. But not for long. Soon she reappeared, and like the Pied Piper, she had a stream of happy and expectant people in her wake. All Colombians, who danced joyfully to *Guabina Chiquinquireña* for as long as the Maestro would play it.

From Washington Mr. Coleman went to the Mocambo in Hollywood. In the meantime he had acquired a library of Colombian music, and he found himself not only playing to such delighted patrons as George Raft and George Murphy, but also doing a bit of extra-curricular coaching to these famous dancers in the intricacies of *Bambuco* steps.

It was at the Mocambo that the incomparable ballroom dancers, Tony and Sally de Marco, heard the *Bambuco*, fell in love with it, and soon made it a part of their repertoire. They danced it in concert at the Hollywood Bowl and the huge audience adored it.

It is really just a step from the Colombian countryside, where the *Mestizos* dance the *Bambuco* in the soil in their bare feet, to the elegant Persian Room of the Hotel Plaza in New York, where in recent weeks the de Marcos have been charming their audiences with their exhibition of the *Bambuco* — Tony faultless in white tie and tails, and the exquisite Sally gowned in a white and pink chiffon confection by Traina Norell, or an Alencon lace trifle by Nettie Rosenstein.

If you are in New York during the Holidays you can see the de Marcos dance the *Bambuco* at the Capitol Theatre. Or you can go and dance it yourself at the Wedgewood Room of the Waldorf Astoria, where Emil Coleman will be dispensing his matchless dance rhythms. Or, of course, you can do both, and two more enjoyable things we cannot suggest.

But even if you can do neither, you can treat yourself to a veritable feast of *Bambuco* music, for Emil Coleman has recorded a really magnificent album of Colombian music for Decca. These records are in your local stores, or you can get them direct from the Decca Distributing Corporation, 3280 Broadway, New York. Sheet music is available from Peer International Corporation, 1619 Broadway, New York.

The records in the Coleman album are variously marked *Bambuco, Guabina, Pasillo* and *Joropo* — but they are all danced in the same style, for these four rhythms, the first three from Colombia, the last from her northern neighbor, Venezuela, are all of the same musical *genre*. This is in the same manner as Cuban rhythms, whether *Bolero, Danzon, Guajira, Guaracha*, are all basically the same, and are all danced as what we call *Rumba*.

As Tony de Marco succinctly put it, "You can lose yourself in this dance", and so we think you will find it. The music is curiously gay and haunting, the steps of the dance are simple and piquant. The *Bambuco* is a real dance, and we embrace it whole-heartedly as an excellent addition to our ballroom dance repertoire.

To the Consulate General of Colombia we owe thanks for cooperation in the preparation of this story. And particularly are we indebted to a charming Colombian girl, Miss Cecilia Mendoza, who most graciously answered our multitude of questions about the *Bambuco*, and who danced for us both the folk version and the salon dance.

And so, Happy *Bambuco-ing* to you — and long live the *Bambuco*, long live Colombia, long live the Good Neighbor Policy!

(*Continued from page* 15)

4 centuries of AMERICAN DANCE

early days of slavery in America, the Negro employed three escape mechanisms which served to make his bitter existence more bearable. These were his new-found Christian religion, his songs and spirituals and his dances. As we know so well, these spirituals have already taken an enduring and permanent place in the field of American folk music and the Negro dances, likewise, have entered the broadening stream of American dance. During the days of his slavery, the Negro sang at his work in the cotton fields and danced in the clay or on the sand during rest periods. Between 'toting bales of cotton and freight on the Mississippi, he shuffled and scraped his feet across the docks. He danced, in fact, whenever and wherever he could — on the levees, in the streets, before his cabin and, especially, clapped his hands and tapped his feet in rhythm to his spirituals in church. As Pearl Primus puts it, "these spirituals were the fighting songs of a people enslaved" and movement came to express fully as much as the verses. According to Miss Primus, these Negroes "preserved the dance in their religious expressions and . . . there is no doubt that the American form emerged from the African".

Like the American Indian, the Negro adopted what was at hand to provide an accompaniment for his dances. Since the Slave Laws of 1740 prohibited the Negro from "beating drums, blowing horns or the like which might on occasion be used to arouse slaves to insurrectionary activity," he found that the banjo, bone clappers, hand-clapping and heel and toe beats would do equally well. Thus, though his earliest dances in America contained overtones of African circle dances and ring shouts, the Negro was also inventive in introducing new characteristics into his dances. The white man's folk dances were also influential and doubtless such early Negro dances as "The Virginia Breakdown", "The Tennessee Double Shuffle", "The Louisiana Heel and Toe" and "The Alabama Kick-Up" contained some of the earliest elements of the fusion of Negro and white dance cultures.

Although many of the traits of the Negro's most primitive African movements were gradually submerged the longer he lived in America, most of the underlying qualities of his earlier tradition remained. Thus, his native abandon, effortless grace and his rhythmic, syncopated style flowed into the main channels of American dance. Katherine Dunham explains that all these "early Negro dances stemmed from the South. After the Civil War the Negro dance development was transferred from the plantation to the minstrel show." (These contributions became so much a part of American theatre-dance that they will be dealt with separately in a forthcoming chapter concerned with theatrical dancing.)

Long before the rise of the Negro minstrel show, however, Southern plantation owners recognized the entertainment value of the dances of their Negro slaves. During the early 1800's it was a common occurrence for a whole party to assemble on the lawn after a dinner party to watch the Negroes "strut their stuff". However, it wasn't until after the Louisiana Purchase in 1812, that slaves were allowed to assemble together for their own religious or recreational dance. After that, they were allowed to meet and dance in an open field that was named Congo Square, situated just outside of New Orleans. Previously, this spot had been reserved as a space for the ceremonials of the Oumas Indians. Today this same location is known as Beauregard Square.

Over the past three centuries in America the Negro has made many valuable contributions to native dance. Racially, he has a superb gift for feeling and expressing rhythm. His disregard for what might be termed any classic style has led him to distort and heighten his movement values of his shoulder, hip, knee and ankle action. Out of one of his African step dances came the pattern of crossing and uncrossing hands against the knee caps which constantly moved in and out. This authentic primitive African movement became part of the Charleston dance craze that swept the country in the Twenties and today is recreated once more in the hilarious "Old Yahoo Step" number that Gower Champion staged for this year's "Lend An Ear".

Actually, the Negro apparently let himself go in his dances and put all of his spirit into his movement. Because of his unconcern for technique he derived physical, mental and moral relaxation from his dancing. He danced because he wanted to and enjoyed every minute of it. In addition, this approach has given his dancing the appearance of effortless ease and abandon. It also accounts for the fact that he can dance for hours at a time without tiring because he instinctively isolates his movements, thus saving himself from needless and unnecessary exertion.

It is a great pity that some Americans have remained so blindly indifferent to the Negro's rich contribuions to our dance. Before, and even as late as the Twentieth Century, other countries, particularly England and France, have recognized the art of Negro American dance. Today, this dance is beginning to play a more important role in America, at least in the North, in leading to a closer and better racial understanding. At present, Negro American dance seems to offer one of the most felicitous methods of producing a necessarily increased awareness on the part of all of us in the inherent stature, dignity and artistry of our Negro brothers and sisters.

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SYBIL SHEARER

(Continued from page 25)

and has a vocabulary of its own. And her face is as clean and undecorated as the Kreutzberg head, which is at once a joy and a relief to behold.

Possibly the gravest fault is her inability to extend her tendrils to a mass consumption. And that is a serious fault in our time! But it is not hers. (Somerset Maugham has said that he, as all writers, writes not as he would but as he must. It is, however, the good fortune of Miltons and Drydens and D. H. Lawrences that the fruits of their effort has a perennial survival in the very materiality of their manuscripts. Terpsichore is not so charitable.)

In the listing of her virtues we all fall short. Her technical accomplishments can be, and have been, fairly judged. Her balance, primarily, is unscientific. The concentration is intense to the point where her awareness of her own self and her occupation at hand is something an observer begins to doubt. She is strong, her limbs are aerial and like balsam wood, and any single member of her body can perform in isolation from the others, or simultaneously, or contrapuntally, or in some deceiving way that just cannot be figured out at all. She is an astonishing virtuosa, but the tricks of her craft are as subtle as the variety of shortnesses of staccato in the playing of Horowitz.

So much for the reviewing of the Shearer shortcomings and technical facilities. For the most part, they are sufficiently evident at any of her concerts.

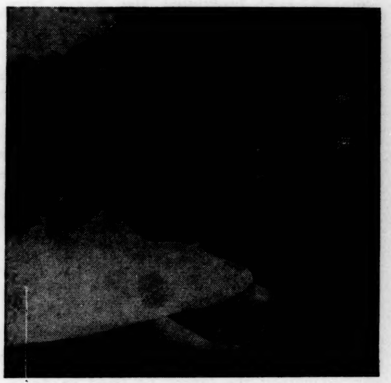
The essence and the miracle of the dancing, however, is in the inner stuff of the woman's personality and her pattern of living.

*

THIS sybil left her New York dance associates a decade ago and moved to the suburbs of Chicago where she works in a studio and in a world and in a way very much alone. Her course is unpredictable. She teaches little children there with much the same affection and principle as the late Elizabeth Duncan did in her several schools abroad. But what she teaches is in no more the Duncan style than is her own performing (though there are the handful who belittle her work as retrogressive, poor Duncan dancing; needless to say, those persons never saw Isadora dance and consequently have no idea of the definitive Duncan technique and have not the slightest basis for calling what they see either derivative or inferior) except for its clarity, its freshness, its crystalline beauty, and its inner propulsion.

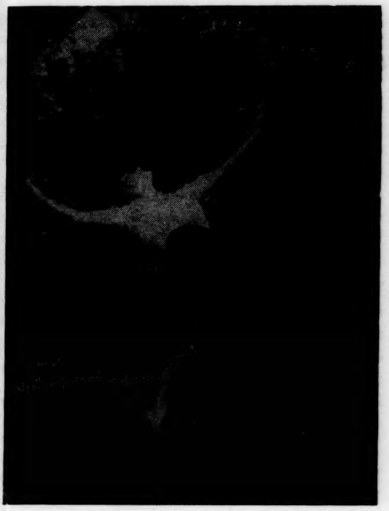
I do not know where Miss Shearer finds her inner propulsion, which Isadora called "the motor in the soul" and which most modern dancers today swear is in the solar plexis. I believe, judging from her work and from what little she says of herself, that she would find a source of energy in her forearm or ankle as certainly and as quickly as she would in her middle torso. Hers is not a technique of contractions and controlled falls and organic grinds from the entrails, though she is the first to admire the mastery of Humphrey and Graham.

Her sources of inspiration are a little more definite than her kinetic theories, though she is never one to perform solely on the waves of inspiration without a concrete technique to support her. There is a Shearer technique which can be taught and transplanted and, in turn, translated into the student's own personal terms of thought and idea. And that is a thing that cannot very successfully be said of the Duncan, Graham or Kreutzberg techniques, though the latter is wise enough, and honest enough, not to try to teach his inimitable style as a technical foundation for his student admirers. It is a difficulty which has seldom, if ever, been supplanted to dance in the idioms of Isadora and Martha without a conception of and an affinity for their respective influences of Hellenic Greece, Nietzsche and Whitman, and of Joyce, Kafka and the phallic primordial. But I digress from the inspiration of Sybil Shearer.



SYBIL SHEARER in conversation with a pupil in her school.

Chiefly, I should say it is nature. She does love nature. She moved to live closer to it. Her house is built low against the earth and there is an acreage of expanse about the yard around. A cluster of oaks is a favorite spot of hers. She loves to walk at great length and with broad strides over the grounds and the adjacent golf greens. She dances out of doors, teaches and choreographs there. She has had a kind of community dance fest at night in a tamped plot of earth and sawdust with non-professional dancers participating in a gentler, modern sort of SACRE DU PRINTEMPS. And her out of doors improvisations,



SYBIL SHEARER in improvisation before her class at Northbrook, Ill.

which she dances without music, seem to keep in harmony and tune with the music I suppose she hears from the great openness around her. The grounds of her place in the country are fenced off with a split rail affair that is right out of Noguchi's wonderful decor for Martha Graham's FRONTIER. And there within that boundary is a frontier woman — medieval, Renaissance, pioneer — at work.

What is transplanted to the stage from this way of living and feeling then is a rare and subtle expression of natural laws, the way things open and close, rise and fall. A fresh beginning and end that is eternal and a reverence for all things as they naturally are, without disguise or affectation. And always she is her beautiful self, the human dancer, at home with and belonging to nature, but never its copyist.

In April of 1949 Sybil Shearer danced for the first time at Carnegie Hall in New York. Her program was an absolute one, with music progressing from Bach to Bartok, with her eight dances numbered but untitled, and with the structure of a cycle. Mary Wigman, nearly twenty years before, had made her American debut in a cycle of dances. And often more recent modern dancers have performed as abstractly as did Miss Shearer, but they chose to title their works as foolishly and as cumbersomely as PINK DANCE or GIRL WITH A ROSE or SHE WALKS AMONG THE LILIES. It was really not such a revolutionary thing, her program. Even in her own earlier concerts of more dramatic and programmatic pieces there was a sequence that we could call cyclic. But the critics seemingly were short of memory, and some of sympathy, and they said this was new.

But apart from its questionable novelty, it was superior and indicative of a capacity for exploring and communicating immediately the emotional areas that belong exclusively to colors and tones and deep feelings that have no verbal counterpart.

One dance that afternoon reached with a particular focus into these sensitive areas. It was danced to a simple *Moment Musicale* of Schubert in a costume of earth color chiffon, hanging as if a miracle had tossed it about the body. The figure entered the stage with an undefinable movement of half-walking, half-tiptoeing, half-drifting; the arms in a constant gentle motion of brushing aside and reaching into — what or where, who knows? The head was inclined to indicate a direction and the face seemed to sense some hope in quest. But the dancer explored all of the stage and left her audience, withdrew into the wings, still searching for some unknown, unmentionable thing.

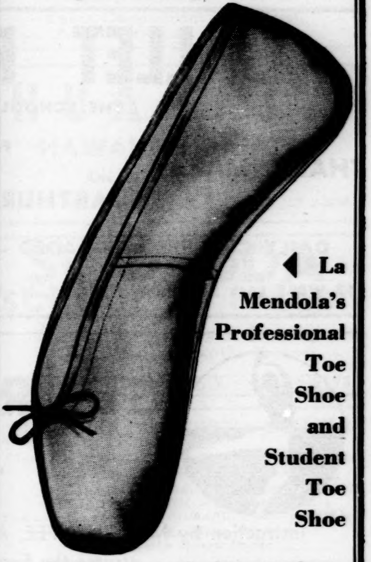
It was never Isadora. It was always Shearer. But the subtlety of the distinction in their geniuses is close to impossible to carry in words. And earlier dance on the program, for instance, to some Corelli music had the style and the fragility of tiny Italian figurines, never precious, but always charming and thoroughly entrancing — more comparable to Carlotta Grisi than to Isadora Duncan.

From a strictly theatrical and histrionic point of view, however, it is unlikely that she can ever be the very first of our dramatic choreographers and dancers. We cannot imagine a HERODIADE or LETTER TO THE WORLD (Graham's) or WITCH DANCE (Wigman's) or the two ANGELS and THREE MAD FIGURES (Kreutzberg's) or WITH MY RED FIRES (Humphrey's) ever being matched in any way comparable by Miss Shearer. The dramatic creators of our time stand quite apart, as certainly does Sybil Shearer.

It seems that from no two succeeding generations do we hear the voice of indisputable genius. Or if it is not genius, which is a dangerous word, as applicable to science as to art, is it a perception of the unrealities which any one of lesser vision would dismiss as illusion or fantasy, but which manifest themselves to a few as the only actualities which we are ever to perceive; and they force, in turn, the world of realities into the impossible domain of error and falsity.

In our midst is this Sybil Shearer. What I believe she does not know is her own capacity for perceiving this unreality. She has not gone so far as to *believe* her otherwise daring shooting beyond the general confines of modern dance. She senses the infinity of her direction, but she is still believing in types and characters and things and places. She alone of all our dancers may yet strip herself of such frail accoutrements. Her potential is an infinitude, and her physical technique is equal to as much.

★



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who is EVERYBODY?

(*Continued from page 27*)

in line. However, giving each child a chance to "lead" the line is a good device. It satisfies those who *want* to lead. Those who don't want to follow, do so knowing they will have a chance to lead. Those who are afraid to do most things alone, seem always to enjoy leading a line in a simple march.

Dancing with one other person, unless she is your special friend or cousin, is much harder than dancing in a circle. One "ME" faces another "ME", eye to eye, and either complete ecstasy results, or if one dominates the other, both usually end up on the floor in a tumble. One little four year old manoeuvred a very complex arrangement with her "partner" in which both hands were crossed with those of the subjected one, in such a way as to necessitate the little tyrant dancing in front of the other, all the time. She used the same device when we changed partners.

Dancing with one other, or with a group in circles, lines, etc., are choreographic forms utilized in this age group *primarily for their social implications.* A four year old summarized our lesson on partners with this definition: "It means to take someone's hand", she said. What a lovely image.

There are diverse pedagogic means for widening the child's horizon to "Us": waiting a turn becomes acceptable only if the child is repeatedly assured by word and action that no one in class is ever deprived of her turn; watching each other, becoming aware that each has a contribution to make; sometimes copying a partner, sometimes leading; changing partners, as in "calling", folk dance style; clapping hands while resting, for the part of the group that is dancing; thematic material that builds good relationships, etc.

DISCIPLINE

Discipline should be based on how to help the child develop her best potentialities *and* function well with the group.

Finding herself in a sympathetic atmosphere, a child may drop many of the devices and defenses she has built up in other situations. For instance, if she feels very much at ease in your class, and if she has been reminded too often by other adults to "be a big girl", she may revert to crawling in the class room. Let her crawl for a while. Another will join her, and half the class may soon be on all fours. If we understand this aberration as a reversion to infancy, disciplinary measures, as such, will only mean to the child that it is more wrong to feel like a baby than to fake being a big girl. Rather than urge or command the child to cease, try to re-establish interest: convert the crawling to an animal study that involves technical problems, choose a baby theme for emotional release, or present a dance situation in contrast to the former part of the lesson. Try to understand their motivations for their behavior, and handle your disciplinary problems in relation to them, as much as possible. Don't be a martyr of patience. Only your understanding coupled with a desire to help will hold up as a source of tolerance and patience.

Unless psychologically ill, the disruptive child can be brought around through kindly methods: sometimes giving her added responsibility in the group is most effective. In most age groups, "to miss a turn" is severe punishment. The issue is not primarily to "keep order" in class, but to convince our children that with order we can learn to dance — without it, we cannot. "Punishment", therefore, should never be meted out without a simple explanation to both the culprit and the class.

Be careful of over-talking. Most of what adults say does not relate to the child's experience and so succeeds only in separating teacher from child. Choose your words. I once heard a teacher say: "Let's get rid of our drums" instead of "Let's put them away". On the other hand, learn the child's language: "Do you know what I have home?" a three year old asked me. "No, what?" "A big run", she said. Explain things, but don't argue with children on a level of adult logic. One little girl for a whole year referred to "her sister", though she knew, I knew, the child referred to was a friend, and that she had no sister at all.

Let the child sometimes use the natural abstract sounds she emits as she dances. Don't be harsh about stopping her Joycian flow of words. Re-direct her interest, intensify it in terms of Dance, and she will cease the stream of talk and sound.

The child wants to experiment in movement. Give her this opportunity. Help her to discover herself, through Dance. There are many things she is experiencing in your classroom, for the very *first* time in her life.

AFRAID

We need a great deal of gentleness in the classroom. One unsocial child may be aggressive, another may retreat, another may cry, and the three may act from a single base — of fear. Let the teacher realize the enormous FEAR of our children. Some fears are open. Said Patsy: "I want to do a tiger dance, it won't be a real tiger, will it, because I'm afraid of tigers". Some fears are hidden. A very alert five year old refused to participate in a swing we were doing, a swing that evolved from the children's delight in monkeys. She said "no" — she had never seen a monkey. This did not seem possible to me. In discussing it with the mother, the mother said, "Of course, she has seen lots of monkeys — but she used to be terribly afraid of them. I thought she had gotten over it".

Children are very sensitive to their real or imagined physical inferiorities. In addition, most children have unfortunately been made ashamed of inability or failure, and rather than say "I can't", a child will say, "I don't want to". She usually wants very much to "hop on one leg" or "lift way up", etc.; and usually, if you suggest doing it with her, the little shadow of sulkiness (fear) on her face changes to tentative hope, and eventually to the eagerness of participation.

The child should never be forced. With help and encouragement, most children are convinced that by doing, progress is made, and thereby fear lessened. The value of this positive attitude to physical effort, with its resultant gain in body stability and in over-all self-confidence, cannot be over-emphasized. It is a prerequisite to the learning of Dance.

THE DANCE

In addition to all the hidden fears and aggressions with which our children are burdened when they come to class, we place them in an untenable situation — in an empty room, with no playground equipment, no toys, *and no precedent in experience*, and we expect them to "learn dancing". Either they have never seen any, or they have seen the commercial, routine television type. Most of them have never seen their parents dance — the closest source of suggestion. And not knowing what it is all about, the uninhibited children begin to shout, and roll, and pull, and run around the big, empty room, while the scared ones get as far away from the emptiness as they can and crouch against the wall. In desperation, the teacher resorts to "imitating" a bunny or a bird and lets it go at that.

Throughout this article, I have very consciously used the word "dance" because a three year old, if registered in your class, is there to learn dancing, or, shall we say, to be exposed, under direction, to those elements of the Dance that can contribute to her whole development. The purpose is neither to "have fun" in the sense of playground, nursery games, etc., nor to have a formalised approach unsuitable for such a young child.

A three to five year old can learn a great deal about basic Rhythm. She can profit by functional exercise to strengthen muscles of the foot, stomach, shoulders, etc. She can be taught dynamic control of the body in movement and she can be directed to the enjoyment of participation in the social aspects of Dance. She can be helped enormously to gain security in the use of her body, and to experience an open response to inner feeling, and to the stimulus of sound. The kind of technical skill that is part of Dance is unique, and is not duplicated in games and sports. The child can also be stimulated in terms of imagination and creativity. In other words, *this youngest group can be taught Dance*, if we teach it, both in content and in presentation *with regard for the child's age.*

If we claim to be teachers of Dance, we will solve the pedagogic problems of teaching three to five year olds, *not by avoiding Dance*, but by *drawing out that part of Dance* that can contribute to the development of the total personality of a three to five year old.

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TAPS for Bill Robinson

(continued from page 13)

He loved vanilla ice cream. While playing Chicago he met a young lady, Miss Fannie S. Clay, behind a drugstore counter, and found her and her ice cream equally pleasing. The drugstore had quite a time keeping enough vanilla in stock during the following weeks. He was a headliner then, and could afford the luxury. At last Miss Clay was persuaded by her best customer to marry him. The union lasted twenty years and they continued to be good friends even after their divorce several years ago. His second marriage was to Elaine Dash, a beautiful young dancer he met in 1939 while starring in the HOT MIKADO on Broadway.

In 1935 he scored a success in Hollywood with his performance in THE LITTLE COLONEL, for which he taught Shirley Temple his famous stair dance. With this dance the hit number in BLACKOUTS, he had established his eminence in modern tap dancing, a dance form which is partly an outgrowth of the old plantation buck and wing.

His staircase number was widely imitated. Fred Stone once sent him a check "in part payment for the stair dance I stole from you." The dance most recently was appropriated by Dan Dailey — in blackface! — for the film YOU'RE MY EVERYTHING.

Robinson made fourteen pictures in Hollywood, including THE LITTLEST REBEL, STEAMBOAT ROUND THE BEND, IN OLD KENTUCKY and REBECCA OF SUNNYBROOK FARM. In all but two of these he was confined to the Uncle Tom characterization of the genial, faithful servant. As the hero of the all-negro STORMY WEATHER, he broke away from the stereotype. Only once was he permitted to essay a dignified role, this in ONE MILE FROM HEAVEN (Fox) which he played with distinction.

★

The funeral was one of the most tremendous New York has ever seen. Over 3,000 packed the church and 100,000 more stood outside, listening to the services over a public address system. A million people lined the streets as the funeral procession went its way from Harlem to Times Square, where it paused for five minutes as a 30 piece orchestra played, "Give My Regards to Broadway" in dance tempo, as Bill would have danced it. Then the solemn line of cars moved on to Evergreen Cemetery in Brooklyn, where 2,000 people had been waiting for six hours in near-freezing temperatures to pay their last respects at the graveside.

★

Bill Robinson was loved as more than a great dancer. He somehow captured the hearts of those who saw him, communicated something of his bouyant self to them. They got a lift from watching their Bojangles dance, tell a story, or maybe just walk out on a stage and smile.

If they ever film Bill's life, which they ought, the final sequence, in technicolour, should show Bill ascending that golden staircase to Heaven in the wonderful dance that captivated millions.

D. D. Livingston

season in review

(continued from page 12)

By way of dramatic contrast, the fevered entrance of the monsters was just about perfect. Balanchine developed their bacchanale in terms of mass rather than significant individual movement. While valid, this is in a way dangerous. For as the ballet loses the high fervor of initial performances, it will be difficult to give this section its proper impact.

Beatrice Tompkins projects even, as in this case, from behind a mask. And there was a keen feeling for distorted torso movement in her writhing Principal Monster.

One of the most satisfying aspects of FIREBIRD is its conclusion. After the Prince has quelled the forces of evil, he marries the lovely Princess (and she was indeed lovely as personified by **Pat McBride**) in a radiant processional entirely free of the corny celebration dances that usually accompany such doings.

In fact, there wasn't a trace of tarnished device in the entire ballet. It was a Slavic treat clothed in a carefully integrated combination of rigorously difficult classic movement and gracious folk feeling.

★

Lew Christensen's JINX is a challenge for the New York City Ballet. For it is a dramatic work, and they are notably weak in dramatic movement.

True, this is a calculated weakness, for both Balanchine and Lincoln Kirstein (General Director) favor dance as a pure art designed to transmit emotion and mood without the aid of dramatic gesture and literary plot. This viewpoint is largely a matter of taste. But in the case of the New York City Ballet, it has produced impressive results in its favor.

Be that as it may, JINX is a dramatic ballet and a convincing one. But only the principals, **Janet Reed, Beatrice Tompkins,** and **Francisco Moncion** lived their roles instead of merely adorning them.

JINX is small in scope, concentrated in action. It takes place in the atmosphere of the circus, where superstition is traditionally rampant. This superstition is personified by a clown named Jinx. Whenever he is present, things go wrong. People are injured, lovers parted. Finally the circus people band together and headed by the ringmaster, beat Jinx to death.

He is sincerely mourned by his friend, the Bearded Lady, and finally, Petrouchka-like, his spirit rises to plague the performers again.

The dances for JINX are simple and episodic in form. The costumes are colorful without being too literal. And the **Benjamin Britten** score with its dry, whirring strings, is properly melodramatic. Now it remains for JINX to be given the stylistic treatment it richly deserves. JINX is also a revival, having been created in 1942 for Dance Players.

★

Usually ballet overtures are something to be squirmed through until the blessed rising of the curtain. But the overture for Balanchine's **BOURREE FANTASQUE** was a revelation. The hoppy old Chabrier music was transformed by conductor Leon Barzin into a bit of Gallic froth full of amazing but stylistically justified rhythmic liberties.

And there were plenty of delightful liberties on stage, too. The opening section found **Tanaquil LeClercq** clad in a brand new stage personality — a naughty-innocent one that produced fetching results in a witty pas de deux with **Jerome Robbins.** Although Mr. Robbins is no mean comedian in his own right, Miss LeClercq stole the show.

The second section evoked a remote nostalgia which although it tastefully avoided the realm of schmaltz, remained static and linear. In the single performance that we saw, **Nicholas Magallanes** and **Maria Tallchief** were woodenly tender as the central couple.

But why worry about this slight defection when there's all the dash and delight of the finale to talk about. It consisted of leaping, turning, flying masses of happy, beautiful young people lead by **Janet Reed,** the happiest, most effervescent of them all. Only a master choreographer can handle sheer multitudes of dancers as Balanchine did in this section and make their antics visually meaningful.

★

Reading through the endlessly fanciful ballet libretti of the Romantic Era, one realizes how uncommunicative most of them are for an audience of today. In fact, GISELLE and COPPELIA are about the only ones that merit their longevity.

But **William Dollar** didn't think so. And so he reconstructed Jules Perrot's 107-year-old ONDINE with pallid results. After all, when one takes a six scene ballet replete with all manner of theatrical effects and reduces it to a single scene with one rather makeshift theatrical effect, the result is bound to be depressing, unless inventive choreography, heightened dramatic tension, or an especially evocative mood compensate for the deficiency.

ONDINE deals with an especially persistent naiad, who pursues a simple Italian fisherman and almost succeeds in marrying him in place of his earthly bethrothed. All ends satisfactorily when Ondine is recalled by Hydrola, Queen of the Sea.

Francisco Moncion poured as much passion and conviction as possible into his role of Matteo, the fisherman. And **Tanaquil Le Clercq** achieved the delicate stylization of gesture required for the role of Ondine. **Melissa Hayden** had a commanding self-assurance that would have suited her admirably for Myrtha in GISELLE, but was sorely out of place in the simple Italian peasant girl, Giannina. **Yvonne Mounsey** was suitably imperious as Hydrola (what a wonderful name for a washing machine!).

Horace Armistead's set was full of at-

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mosphere. It consisted of driftwood and tree trunk formations and a cosy little grotto, all of which looked as though they had spent much time in the wind and salt air. The effect of the rising sea from which Ondine emerged was accomplished by rippling strips of chiffon which extended the width of the stage. It appeared more economical than convincing.

Mr. Dollar made a strange musical choice for ONDINE. It was one or more Vivaldi Violin Concertos that sounded as though they would do very well for a Balanchine abstraction. ONDINE requires a much less elevated score — something that can be unabashedly sunny, warm, peasantlike, and lyrical.

★

In addition to the four premieres, there were nine works from the company's regular repertoire. Of these, eight were by Balanchine and one, THE GUESTS, by Jerome Robbins, Associate Artistic Director.

Incidentally, Mr. Robbins did a bit of dancing during the season and proved to have more aplomb than ever. It would certainly behoove him to take over a heavier dancing assignment for the Spring Season.

Mr. Robbins and Mr. Moncion are the only two male members of the company who are technically secure and can also project. **Nicholas Magellanes,** while spirited, is the eternal juvenile. **Frank Hobi** is hampered by poor posture, especially through the neck and shoulders. And **Todd Bolender** and **Herbert Bliss** often lapse into decorative mannerism.

The distaff side is far more distinguished and faceted. **Maria Tallchief,** as we have already indicated, is a classical ballerina of stature. But she must occasionally be careful lest she allow her musicianship and impeccable line to compensate for a lack of emotional participation. **Tanaquil LeClercq** is developing the play and elasticity in her movement that comes with true technical security. And she is sending out interesting shots in a comic and dramatic direction. They should be developed.

Janet Reed, who is not always academically precise, has such a glowing stage personality and so much feeling for theatre, that she is extremely valuable addition to the company. **Melissa Hayden** and **Lois Ellyn,** also new additions, are two sides of a coin. Miss Ellyn is clean, bright, and unpretentious. She appears to have sensitivity, but has not been in the complicated Balanchine repertoire long enough to dance without the mental process predominating. Miss Hayden, on the other hand, attacks her movement with bite and authority. Her solo work, particularly in SYMPHONY IN C and CONCERTO BAROCCO was of the bravura type and in some ways inconsistent with the more disciplined approach of her fellow dancers.

On the whole, the new works received more careful performances than the repertoire ballets. But this is understandable in a company that does not have the peaceful rehearsal existence that public subsidy allows. Let us hope this, too, will come with time.

via the grapevine

(continued from page 9)

lande, came to Paris to put on two performances of PUCK, a fairly-like opera version of "A Midsummers' Night's Dream", with book by Andre Boll and music by Marcel Delannoy. The great novelty of the event lay in the fact that for the first time Puck is personified by a dancer, never singing or speaking. The role was created by a dancer of whom we will surely hear great things, **Roland April**, 20 years old, incredibly light and graceful, fanciful, and entirely "Puckish". The choreography is by Jean Combes. The Strasbourg Theatre possesses an adequate corps de ballet which gave Roland April excellent support.

G. A.

★

CHICAGO

Sadler's Wells Ballet made the expected splash in Chicago, with $102,400.00 at the box office and not an unsold seat for the ten performances, not to mention loads of disappointed people turned away (including the boy who paraded in front of the theatre with a sign offering to pay any price for a seat). Though the dance world here was impressed by the many excellencies of the company and not unaware of its few shortcomings, to the public at large this was the in-person appearance of the stars of RED SHOES and TIME Magazine's cover-girl.

Ninette de Valois spoke at a party of the Chicago Ballet Guild and also gave a noon-hour talk at the Chicago Public Library, which for over a decade has had a respectable amount of ballet activity in the shape of exhibits and talks. It was amazing how many people were willing to give up their lunch hours to hear Miss de Valois, and the crowd of more than 500 overflowed into nearby corridors.

Martha Graham and her company appeared on Thanksgiving Day and played to a full house in the evening (after Thanksgiving dinner!).

Charles Weidman's ballets in the productions of the New York City Opera, shown here November 23 to December 18, ranged from the excellent to the poor. His best work in the operas shown to date was in LOVE FOR THREE ORANGES, where his pantomimic talents and long experience in the use of wit and humor in movement made the whole production sparkle. He worked with the singers, as well as the dancers. In fact, the best pas seul was mountainous basso Richard Wentworth's ribbon dance.

Not so good were the dances in AIDA, which are part of a spectacle. There were some interesting and original effects, but the whole was inept, largely due to dancers whose technical equipment was not for the spectacular.

Chicago dancers have not been sitting down, even if all the visitors made it hard to find a time and place to show themselves. From December 8 to 17, the **Eleanor Lauer** Modern Dance Group appeared on

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a program with the Actors Company, dancing COGITO ERGO SUM, a satire on cocktail party intellectuals, to score by Stravinsky, and a suite of dances to poems by Edith Sitwell.

Belden Starr gave two studio programs on December 4. **Nataraj Vashi** and **Praveena** gave an evening of Dances of India in Mandel Hall at the University of Chicago November 19. The Chicago Dance Council gave a Christmas tea for the dancers in the Chicago cast of KISS ME, KATE.

Romola James, accompanied by Marjorie Dorn, gave a solo recital on November 17.

A. B.

*

MONTREAL

The final performances of the Sadler's Wells on their American tour, saw the company with some effects of wear and tear at times, but resourcefully adapting itself to difficult stage conditions. A number of dancers were, in fact, sent back by air ahead of time, only to have trouble landing in England, owing to abnormal fog conditions. After flying back to Scotland and again down to England, they finally landed in London none the worse. **Ninette de Valois** also left the company after its Chicago engagement.

On its opening night in Montreal, an incident, first described as the result of a fainting spell by a member of the audience, but later officially described as a fire scare, slightly disturbed the tenor of the atmosphere. Apparently, some papers in a large ash tray in the lobby were set afire, and the rear of the orchestra took alarm. This occured just before Fonteyn's pas de deux with Somes in the 2nd act of SWAN LAKE. The flurry was staunchly attributed by one of the officials of the company as an anti-English demonstration by nationalists. It need hardly be added, however, that all Canadian performances were sold out practically without advertising, before the company arrived in the country.

Montreal was the company's favourite city in Canada, a fact avowed with spirit by **Margot Fonteyn** in a radio interview. Despite prodding, she declared that while Toronto might be suitable for its residents, it was no place for a visitor.

Speaking of radio technic, **Beryl Grey** was nothing short of sensational in this field, giving a strong impression of the solidarity and traditions of the dancers of the Sadler's Wells.

The company returned home in two large BOAC carriers, flying from Montreal December 12.

*

The **Ruth Sorel** dance group made its December inviation to appear in New York possible by the holding of a special benefit performance organized and given at the Normandie Roof in Montreal by the Canadian Art Theatre. This generous effort, given added impetus by leading members of the Sadler's Wells ballet, who made a few appropriate remarks, resulted in funds which made the trip to New York possible for the whole group.

Sonia Woizikowska is now also associ-

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21. WASHBOARD RHYTHM. (Solo or group using thimbles for strumming.)
22. THE SCRATCH. (Eccentric solo or group.)
23. SHAKIN' THE SHAKER. (Intermediate — cocktail shakers-off beat rhythm.)
24. TECHNIQUE vs. SWING. (Court Room Scene good opening — cast of eleven.)
25. BUCK-AROO. (Intermediate group of four-'ariate.)
26. SIGNALS. (Intermediate — Navy flag Wig-Wag.)
27. SEMAPHORE TAP. (Intermediate — military tap swish of flags on stop time music.)
28. BROOM DANCE. (Intermediate — using small push brooms stiff bristles — group.)
29. SOFT SHOE CANE. (Solo or group. Lots of style top hat and tails.)
30. TAPS IN PAWN. (Opening Number — Pawn Shop Scene, characters pawn talents but are redeemed by Broadway Manager.)
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32. CRICKET STRUT. (Children or adult beginners.)
33. POP GUN PARADE. (Children, easy.)
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89. BANJO TAP (Novelty tap Dance)
90. ANVIL CHORUS TAP (Group, with prop anvils)
91. BARBER SHOP SWING (Group, wearing beards)
92. DOING THE JAY WALK (Musical Comedy Tap)
93. TRUCKIN' (A Tap Dance Version)
94. PIANO TAP (Group, carrying toy pianos)
95. MAMMIES ON PARADE (Group, southern mammies and Topsy)
96. HOT FEET (Group, boot-blacks and customers)
97. SWISHIN' (Solo or group strut)
98. OZARK ANTICS (A Hillbilly Novelty)
99. HOT TAMALES (Solo, duet or group)
100. THE CONTINENTAL (Duet or group)
101. THE BIG BAD WOLF AND THE THREE LITTLE PIGS (Quartet)
102. SHAKIN' THE RHUMBA (Solo or group, with rhumba shakers)
103. TAMBOURINE RHYTHM (Solo or group, with tambourines)
104. TAP-IOCA (Duet, or couples)
105. I SEE BY THE PAPERS (Rubber-legs rhythm, duet)
106. JUNGLE RHYTHM (Two groups of girls)
107. MEXICONGA (Musical Comedy Tap Version)
108. TAMBOURINE TAP (Solo or group)
109. MUSICAL COMEDY TAP ROUTINE (Solo or group)

ADVANCED TAP ROUTINES

35. TAP TEASERS. (Rhythm and Riff.)
36. RHYTHM-TIME. (Rhythm One O' the best.)
37. ASSORTED ROLLS. (Various Rolls.)
38. THE ROGASTAIRE. (Boy and Girl.)
39. RHYTHMETTE. (Rhythm and Riff.)
40. ADVANCED SOFT SHOE. (Effective toe and heel work.)
42. BUCK-O-MANIA. (Tricky Rhythms.)
43. RHYTHMOLOGY. (Wing and Toe Stand combination.)
44. RHYTHM RIDDLES. (Stylish heel and toe work.)
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46. TWIRLING RHYTHM. (Smart Tap Solo.)
47. RHYTHMANTICS. (Rhythm Solo.)
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50. RHYTHM KINKS. (Professional Routine.)
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120. ADVANCED BROKEN RHYTHM ROUTINE

INTERMEDIATE TAP ROUTINES

51. TAPTIME. (Rhythm group or solo.)
52. SWINGTIME. (Hot-Cha tap.)
53. INTERMEDIATE RHYTHM (B). (Group.)
54. HOT CHA TAP. (Swing style for girls.)
55. INTERMEDIATE RHYTHM BUCK. (Fast — Pick-ups for finish.)
56. RHYTHM TAP ROUTINE. (Sliding trench finish.)
57. DRUM ROLL RHYTHM. (Military Rhythm — cramp rolls.)
58. MILITARY TAP ROUTINE. (Nice rhythm.)
59. SUZI-Q. (Tap version.)
60. JUST TAPS. (Flashy, smart and easy.)
61. TAPPIN' TIME. (Foundation-valuable.)
62. SOFT SHOE. (One and one-half chorus.) breezy.
63. FOOT NOTES. (Flash, lots of style.)
64. BUCKIN ALONG. (Class or solo.)
65. FLASH RHYTHM. (Snappy hard intermediate.)
66. BUCKETTE. (Good old buck dance routine.)
67. RHYTHM BUCK ROUTINE. (Medium fast tempo.)
68. INTERMEDIATE SOFT SHOE. (Solo or group. Medium slow.)
69. SOFT SHOE KICK ROUTINE. (High kicks, tap specialty.)
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72. TANGLEFOOT. (ROXYETTE line-up. Special music 50c extra.)
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74. TRAVELON. (Jack Manning pictures illustrating steps.)
75. DIPSY DOODLE. (Musical Comedy semi-advanced.)
121. SLOW RHYTHM BUCK ROUTINE
122. INTERMEDIATE ECCENTRIC ROUTINE

BEGINNERS TAP ROUTINES

76. WALTZIN' ON DOWN. (Effective not difficult.)
77. SIMPLE BUCK DANCE. (Good foundation.)
78. SIMPLE WALTZ CLOG. (Not old standard type.)
79. FOUNDATION TAP BUCK. (For beginners.)
80. BABY TAP. (Effective for young children.)
81. BABY HOT-CHA. (Jazz tap for children.)
82. FOUNDATION TAP ROUTINE. (Showy, simple.)
83. TINY TOTS TAP. (Teachable—simple.)
84. BEGINNERS TAP. (For beginners, flashy.)
85. FUNDAMENTAL TAP. (Nice arrangement, good style.)
86. FUNDAMENTALS OF TAP DANCING (And a System of Teaching Them)
87. SIMPLE SOFT SHOE
88. STRUTTIN TOTS. (Simple, effective style.)
123. SIMPLE TAP DANCE (For children and beginners)
124. FLASHY BEGINNERS SOFT SHOE (Solo or group)
125. E-Z-TAP (A foundation tap dance routine)
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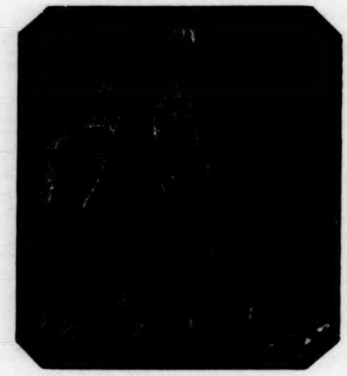

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ated with the Ruth Sorel group, and has started giving classes for them in Montreal.

F. A. C.

★

HOLLYWOOD

Dance activity picked up a lot in and around the smog of Los Angeles during the past month. I attended the twelfth annual scholarship auditions, as judge, held by the **Lester Horton** school. Without fanfare or exhibitionism, Horton has conscientiously given scholarships to deserving young people, regardless of colour, race or creed, asking only that they work as hard as he and his staff do — in order to make them into proper concert material. It was an inspiring afternoon, but Heaven save me from ever having to judge anything like this again. I wanted to give the school to every kid I saw — at least, a hundred, who tried out. The winners receive a year's training in both modern and ballet technics, plus theater-craft, which means: make-up, costuming, set — building and designing, masks, dance props, and a chance to choreograph dances for other students.

Vaudeville has re-entered the local field. **Inesita** has won merited praise and star billing. Vaudeville can do nicely with other performers of concert caliber, to name but one, Carmelita Maracci. It offers them a revitalized show wagon, if they only cared to utilize it.

Lila Zali and **Marc Wilder** were the star dancers of a Yuletide fantasy, ONCE UPON A CHRISTMAS. Even as a Christmas toy, Zali was every inch the ballerina.

Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo spent ten days here. It has never done better business or given us a more tiresome season.

J. W.

★

SAN FRANCISCO

Balletomanes and box-offices here prove it has been too long since the last ballet season. **Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo** did the best business it has ever done at any time. Several performances housed nearly 500 standees. It was a pleasure to stand just to realize that ballet is getting to be an important industry. **Danielian** fans were disappointed at his absence; he was in New York at his mother's bedside. **Slavenska** amazed everyone by appearing in some of her performances without ribbons to hold her toe shoes on. By Grace of God and Capezio, they stayed on. The general public meanwhile marveled at how her tutus stayed on without visible lack of support. O, well. **Nina Novak** was introduced here last year as having spent two years in a concentration camp in Poland. After her grand performance in RODEO, one critic thought she was a native Texan.

★

Johnny Singleton, well-known tap dancer, who has appeared in many Broadway shows, has opened a school here, with **Merriem Lanova** as head of the ballet department. Scholarships were donated to eleven talented youngsters. These were bought and paid for by various residents of this city. Miss Lanova gave the exams, with **Danilova** adding combinations for final choice. The contest had been announced throughout the city, with the result that Lanova saw most of the contestants for the first time only at the auditions. Judges and contestants went away happy.

Aaron Girard, recently returned from Spain, and past member of both Ballets Russes, as well as Ballet International, came here to join **Pacific Dance Theatre.**

Lew Serbin, director of the Dance Art Company, has brought back from his world tour some fascinating costumes, fabrics and accessories from the East.

Arthur Murray held open house to celebrate the 36th anniversary of the school.

Madelynne Greene appeared in two recitals last month. She and her partner, **Virgil Morton**, interpreted the folk songs of David Allen. Miss Greene also made her debut on television for KPIX with a weekly half-hour show. Her partner will act as M. C. with her Festival Workshop group in ensemble dances.

B. de B.

★

NEW YORK

If the first season of the **New York City Dance Theatre** proved anything, it proved that faith can move mountains. In this case, it was the faith in American modern dance by that astounding believer, **Morton Baum** of the New York City Center. If you can imagine filling a theatre the size of the City Center for ten days, and these the ten worst box-office days of the year for any kind of theatrical enterprise, i.e., the ten days just before Christmas — and filling it with a program of modern (what a terrible word) dance, and all this with four major modern companies, as well as numerous individual soloists, all rehearsed, directed, cajoled and beat into one integrated whole — well, we've lived to see it.

It would be useless to deny the fact that the tall job of organization of such a significant and wonderful enterprise in American dance could never have happened without some hard, unflinching ploughing and if ever parties on both sides of the footlights had anybody to thank, they could thank the organizers of the Dance Theatre, namely **Isadora Bennett** and **Richard Pleasant**, and their associate, **Don Duncan.** A parallel in the ballet field would have meant a repertory containing four major ballet companies and ballet luminaries unattached to companies, all performing with perfect docility under one roof. The mere idea is refreshing, if fantastic.

This is in no sense a review of the season — that will come in the next issue (February) — but it is a harbinger of good tidings, the assurance of a second and further season of repertory American dance. From this and future seasons will emerge a type of dance theatre, which by any name, contemporary and/or modern, will be the crystallization of the 20th century in American dance.

★

Negotiations are well under way for Ballet Theatre's appearance in Europe late this Spring, probably at the Prince's in London, and in September in Venice at the annual Festival. Another American who promises to break upon the European horizon this year is **Martha Graham.** The probability of a Graham and Company season in England, France and Italy, becomes more concrete than it has been for the years it has been in the constant discussion stage. Likewise, Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, for the first time since before the war, is likely to resume summer seasons in England and France . . . **Dwight Deere Wiman**, Broadway theatrical producer, has joined Ballet Theatre in the capacity of associate producer, with **Lucia Chase** and **Oliver Smith** . . . The first performance in the series called **A.S.P. Dance Workshop** was held at the Studio Theatre, December 11. This is an outgrowth of the movement of earlier this year to found a Contemporary Dance Company for the purpose of presenting leaders in the dance field in new compositions as well as to give an opportunity to new young artists to perform. Artists who appeared in the first performance were **Pearl Lang, Don McKayle, Daniel Negrin, Miriam Pandor, Beatrice Seckler** and **Helen Temiris.**

★

The box office fever registered in favor of the **New York City Ballet** company's November-December season guarantees a certain Spring season, promised for three weeks beginning February 21st, with at least two of the recent new works, FIREBIRD and BOURREE FANTASQUE assured, and two totally new works to come. These are AGE OF ANXIETY, a ballet with choreography by **Jerome Robbins**, scored by Leonard Bernstein, based on W. H. Auden's "Age of Anxiety"; and a mounting of an 18th century **ballet de cour** by **George Chaffee**, called Les Caracteres de la Danse. ONDINE is to be temporarily abandoned, and will be re-staged for a later 1950 season by the company.

★

Maria Tallchief joins Ballet Theatre in Chicago and for the tour up to the time of the Spring season of the New York City Ballet, to which she returns late in February . . . **Janet Collins**, hailed by press and public as one of the finds of a generation, has taken the expected turn and will make her musical comedy bow in OUT OF THIS WORLD, an Arnold St. Suber production, with choreography by Hanya Holm, which goes into rehearsal this month . . . **Katherine Dunham** is expected back in New York next month in a recess between her European and South American seasons . . . Visitors from Europe at Christmastime include **Jose Greco, Nila Amparo, Luis Olivares** and **Carola Goya.** They will return to fulfill European engagements on January 12 . . . **Kazimir Kokich** and **Iva Withers** took vows in New York just before Christmas. Kokich is currently appearing in GENTLEMEN PREFER BLONDES, in which he dances a pas de deux with **Anita Alvarez**, who replaced Muriel Bentley when the latter became too ill to go on with the show . . . A couple of Americans took vows in London last month, we mean **Constance Garfield**, and **Alan Baker.** She is with **Grand Ballet de Monte Carlo;** he is a variety show dancer . . . **Mademoiselle Magazine** awarded citations for merit to **10 Young Women of the Year** again in 1949 and this year their award for a dancer went to **Margot Fonteyn**, who was not present at the ceremony to receive it. She flew down from Montreal and got grounded in a fog at Boston. Miss Fonteyn's slight illness last month prevented her from accompanying Sadler's Wells back to England on the 12th. She sailed for home a week before Christmas . . . A New York fan club known as **Balletiana** invites ballet lovers to attend any and all 1950 meetings of the club, the first in particular to be held January 15 . . . The **Volkoff Canadian Ballet** and the **Ruth Sorel Montreal Ballet**, both of which made their first appearance in New York December 17, were feted by the Canadian Consul at a party to the press and by a party at the **La Meri** studio, the latter sponsored by **Capezio** in collaboration with the Russian Tea Room . . . A party for **Uday Shan Kar** on a rather immense scale, slated for the Waldorf Astoria, and sponsored by the East and West Association, had to be scotched because the dancer did not sail for America on the date expected. His late arrival ruled out the many entertainments planned in his honour. The company opened for a 3 week season at the 48th St. Theatre without mishap . . . The rafters at Hunter College shook December 17 from the impact of the Christmas party staged there by the **Country Dance Society of America.** In honour of the occasion there was a demonstration of the Abbot's Bromley Horn Dance, as well as the Boar's Head Carol and Processional. A very festive event . . . **Hadassah**, oriental dancer and choreographer, entered a Manhattan hospital late in December. Her illness has caused the cancellation of numerous TV and concert dates including the one in the American Museum of Natural History series in January. The YMHA concert on March 22, however, will proceed as scheduled. Milton Epstein, artistic director of the company, will supervise rehearsals until the return of Hadassah.

★

Martha Graham will appear in Louisville, Ky. on January 4th, as soloist with the Louisville Orchestra, in a solo dance entitled JUDITH, scored by William Schuman. This is the first known occasion where a symphony orchestra has commissioned a dancer to do a work in this manner. Miss Graham will dance in front of the orchestra itself. Later in the month, if a theatre can be obtained, which at the moment remains uncertain, there will be a New York season of the company, with several new works offered.

★

The **Brooklyn Museum** is the newest patron of concert dancers, offering to them an arena for appearances, with Fred Berk presiding as director. The series is to be called STAGE FOR DANCERS and any dancers with solo works to offer are invited to contact Mr. Berk. The series has been sponsored by Miss Hannah Rose, Education Director of the Museum. Programs will be given the 3rd Saturday of each month from 2-3 P.M. Admission to the public is free.

photo by Varvara, London

Cyril Beaumont presents a prize — his own monograph on Anna Pavlova — to a small Cecchetti-method student who composed and danced a solo for a display during recent Congress of the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing in London.

news of . . . teachers schools associations

CHRISTMAS parties! There were plenty of them everywhere and this year, as usual, teachers all over the country delighted their students (and often the parents) with special Yule festivities. Among the early birds was **Patty Ann Rita** of Hartford, Conn. who had her party December 12. On the other hand, **Roberta Stephens** in Virginia Beach, Va. is having her celebration well after the Christmas school vacation, on January 11. Among other notable mistletoe melees were those given by **Mary E. Keough** at her studio in Albany, N. Y. on December 19, by **Alicia Langford** in Boston the Friday before Christmas, and **Dorothy Singer**, Bay Shore, L. I. on December 28. **Lillian Rainwater** showed a program of dance movies to her pupils in Florence, S. C. at her party on December 17, as did a large number of other teachers, including **Edwina Robinson Day** down in Texas City, Tex. who spread her parties over several days to keep the various age levels together.

★

DANCE Magazine extends its deepest sympathy to the family and friends of **Al Keller**, a man well-known and loved by many Chicagoans who knew him in his capacity of manager of Capezio's Chicago branch . . . The **Edna McRae** ballet danced LES SYLPHIDES on December 7 in Oak Park, Ill. . . . **Regina** and **Senia Russakoff** and the **Boston Civic Ballet Ensemble** will honour the memory of Anna Pavlova with a memorial concert which they will give at Jordan Hall, Boston, on January 23rd, the 19th anniversary of her death . . . **Pianowski**, for many years associated with Pavlova as her regisseur, recently arrived in this country and is presently teaching in Boston. He gives the first recital of his school on December 28 at Hancock Hall . . . **Barbara Carter**, formerly with Radio City Music Hall ballet, has opened a school in S. Hadley Falls, Mass. Miss Carter has also appeared in Broadway musicals, and has been seen in TV with Milton Berle and Lanny Ross . . . **Robert Pike**, student of the **Belle Bender** school in Chicago, appeared with the **New York City Opera** company's corps de ballet when that company played in Chicago . . . The **Children's Ballet Theatre** of San Francisco, **Evelyn Wenger**, director, is giving two matinees in January in Piedmont and Burlingham, Cal. They will do a new work called FEAST OF THE SPIDER . . . **Michael Linda Keller** and other pupils of **Frances Chalif** appeared in recital on December 10th at the St. George Hotel Brooklyn, at a birthday luncheon of the United Order of True Sisters.

★

As for some years past, **Oscar Duryea** has again accepted the co-chairmanship of the Dance Studios Division of the annual March of Dimes and he, as well as we, urge that all civic-minded teachers do their part in this humanitarian campaign by giving a March of Dimes dance or recital, offering private or semi-private lessons as prizes. Teachers are urged to send their contribution to Mr. Duryea at the Hotel des Artistes, New York City 23.

★

The **Dance Educators of America** will give an all-day session on **January 15** at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York . . . The **Dance Masters of Wisconsin** had an all-day meeting on December 4 in the studio of **Adele Artinian** in Milwaukee. **Sylvester Smith** taught acrobatics, **Harold Piller** baton, **Louis Girard**, ballroom, **Elisa Stigler**, character and Spanish, **Vesper Chamberlain**, tap and **Ann Barzel**, ballet. The meeting drew a very large attendance; socially, too, it was a great day, with a luncheon in the Artinian studio and later a faculty dinner at Louis Girard's beautiful new apartment. The January meeting of the club will be held on January 15 at the same spot.

Winners of the Memorial Scholarship competition held at the Singleton School in San Francisco November 26. Standing in back row are the local judges, l. to r. Beatrice de Baltazar, DANCE Magazine's S. F. correspondent, Robert Hagen, of the S. F. Chronicle, Ethel Turner of Capezio's S. F. branch. Middle row, standing l. to r. Sandy Smith, an unidentified child (apologies to child and reader), Jeanine Thoene (grand prize winner), Norma Cuadra, ALEXANDRA DANILOVA (who presided as principal judge), Diane Bondanza, Pat Troy, Corienne Campbell, Yevett del Degan, Front row, seated l. to r. Rita Lee Agnese, Paula Samonta, Maureen Clark.

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22. GERMAN PEASANT DANCE—Polka: Boy and Girl
23. GOPAK—Character
24. GRAND VALSE BRILLIANTE—Classic Toe
25. HUNGARIAN FOLK DANCE—Character: Folk
27. LA COQUETTE—Toe
28. LA DANSEUSE—Toe
29. MOMENT LYRIQUE—Toe
30. NA BEREGU VOLGA—Folk—All Grades
32. OBERTASS—Folk: Boy and Girl
33. PAS DE DEUX—Classic Toe: 2 Girls
34. PAS DE TROIS—Classic Toe: 2 Girls, 1 Boy—14 pages of music and instructions
35. PETITE POLKA—Classic
36. PIERRETTE—Classic Toe
37. PIERROT—Character
40. POLISH BRIDE—Character
41. POLKA CAPRICE—Classic Toe
42. POLISH MAZURKA—Folk
43. POLKA MUSETTE—Couple Dance
44. POMPONETTE—Character
45. PUPPETS—Character: Boy and Girl
46. RENDEZVOUS—Character Solo
48. RUSSIAN DANCE—Folk
53. SERENADE D'AMOUR—Classic Boy and Girl
55. SLEEPING BEAUTY VALSE—Classic
57. TAMARA—Character: Semi-Oriental
58. THE FIREFLY—Classic
59. THE GOLDEN DOLL—Semi-Character
60. THE HUNGRY DON JUAN—Character: Boy & Girl
61. THE HUSSAR—Military Solo
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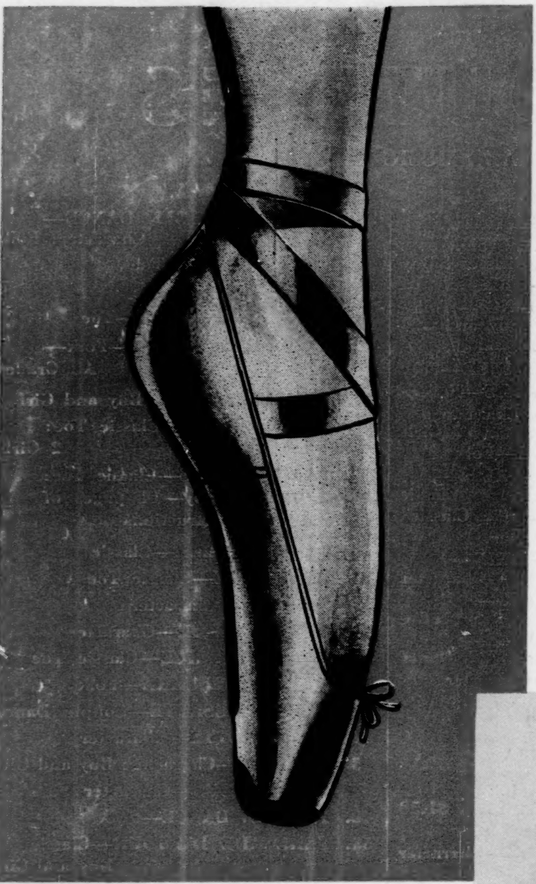

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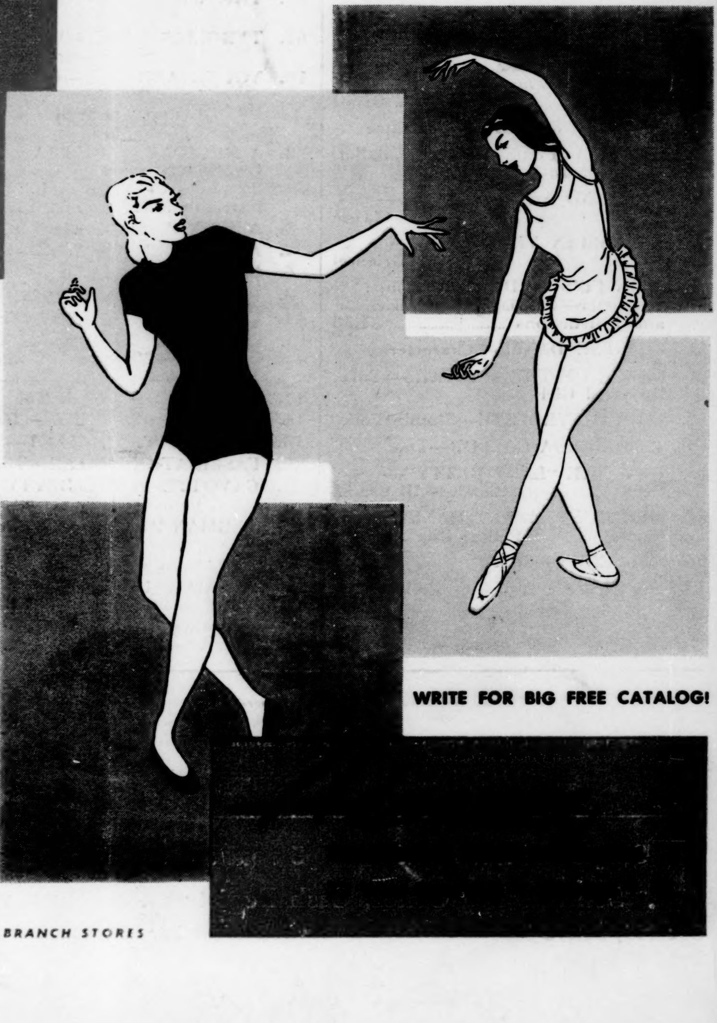

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